FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-034
Tuesday
20 February 1996

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-034 *20 February 1996*

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Yemen May Refer Hanish Question to Arab League

MM1602142096 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 16 Feb 96 p 4

[Report by Iqbal 'Ali 'Abdallah: "Reports of Contacts Between Asmara and Tel Aviv To Establish Israeli Projects on Hanish Island"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo — Arab political sources in Cairo have revealed the existence of "contacts between Asmara and Tel Aviv over the establishment of Israeli tourist projects on al-Hanish al-Kabir island, which Eritrean forces occupied on 15 October using gunboats supplied to Eritrea by Israel last year."

The sources told AL-HAYAH that "President Isaias Afwerki's visit to Israel was designed to stress Eritrea's wish for Israel to establish tourist projects on the island. Afwerki is seeking to impose a fait accompli and to perpetuate the occupation of the Red Sea island." The sources said the Yemeni Government may refer the issue to the Arab League.

Muhammad Luqman, Yemen's ambassador to Cairo and its representative to the League, briefed Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid last Monday on developments in the crisis with Eritrea and on his country's position on the Egyptian and French mediations and the results of contacts with the states concerned with the security and stability of the Red Sea region.

Diplomatic sources in Cairo expect a meeting of the Yemeni, Eritrean, and Egyptian foreign ministers and the French mediator Francis Gutmann to be held in the Egyptian capital after 'Id al-Fitr. The sources said that "Gutmann's visits to Asmara and Sanaa are designed to achieve this." Ambassador Luqman told AL-HAYAH that the "Arab League has stood by Yemeni rights as regards the Eritrean occupation of al-Hanish island. The use of force is unacceptable in relations among states."

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arabic Support for Farrakhan Viewed

MM1602144596 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 16 Feb 96 p 9

[Article by 'Uthman Mirghani: "Mad Rush Over Louis Farrakhan"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The motives behind the current tour of the region by the Nation of Islam leader are political rather than religious, and may do more harm than good.

One feels surprise and sadness, these days, at the mad rush over Louis Farrakhan, the U.S. Nation of Islam leader. Surprise, because some states visited by Farrakhan have treated him as if they have suddenly discovered that there are Muslims in the United States. Sadness, because all this mad rush, fiery statements, and financial commitments are in fact the result of political considerations and motives, rather than religious ones, as some are trying to characterize them.

What is even more disturbing is the fact that Islam's image could be harmed by such a mad rush. Louis Farrakhan does not represent the majority of U.S. Muslims. In fact, his very extreme views, his confrontational invective, his style of action, and his message are very far removed from the moderate Muslim imams and preachers in the U.S. arena, who see him as an element of dissension and discord, while some fear his influence on the young and on Islam's image.

Anyone who has the opportunity to attend some of Farrakhan's lectures will certainly come out with the firm impression that the man's powers do not stem from his being a scholar well versed in Islam, but rather from his gift for oratory and for inflaming the feelings of blacks against whites and instilling anger toward the social, economic, and perhaps political injustice to which they are exposed. Civil rights leaders in the United States (Muslims and Christians) have disagreed with Farrakhan because of his extreme views and because his proposals lead to further divisions and confrontations.

No doubt many U.S. Muslims will be scared when they hear or read Farrakhan's statements in Tehran, where he said: "The Muslims will destroy the United States." The Muslims there are U.S. citizens and certainly do not want to "destroy" their own country. Instead, they want to improve its conditions and their own, and achieve coexistence and an atmosphere of tolerance there. Such views and statements will not destroy the United States, nor will they serve Islam and the Muslims in or outside the United States.

The contributions which have reportedly been given to Farrakhan in some of these capitals are no service to U.S. Muslims. Apparently, their objective is the attempt by some states to settle accounts with the U.S. Administration by using the Nation of Islam leader. Had the purpose been to serve Islam and the Muslims in the United States, these states would not have waited for Farrakhan to visit them before offering millions or billions of dollars in support. The money could have been allocated to Islamic centers dedicated to Islam's call and teaching in the United States instead of being used for propaganda and political activities.

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Louis Farrakhan's current tour is merely a political action through which the Nation of Islam leader aims to obtain support and publicity, and through which some capitals in the region want to settle their accounts with the United States, and perhaps cause some social unrest there. The image of Islam and Muslims can only be harmed by such actions.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says Bypass Roads 'Total Departure' From Agreements

JN1602201696 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat hosted an iftar banquet for members of the elected Legislative Council in Gaza this evening. The members said they are proud to have the precious confidence of the people who elected them as their representatives. The banquet was attended by the representatives and ambassadors of Arab countries to the National Authority [NA].

Addressing the members, President Yasir 'Arafat said the council will assume its tasks and prepare to convene after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday. Following deliberations, the members decided to perform 'Id prayers in the Palestinian territories and the lands threatened with settlement and the building of bypass roads. They also decided to convene the conference of the national and Islamic committee for confronting settlement activity in Bethlehem's Municipality Hall at 1130 on 22 February.

President Yasir 'Arafat said the major peril threatening our land now is the settlement drive in Jerusalem and the rest of our homeland. He called for a unified effort to confront the settlement drive. He said the bypass roads and the confiscation of lands for any purpose and under any pretext are a total departure from the agreements. He added that the foremost task of the Legislative Council and all of the NA's institutions and agencies is to protect the land.

President 'Arafat hailed the initiative taken by the masses of Bethlehem to defend the lands and defy attempts to control the main road near Rachel's Tomb. He called for emulation of this blessed and peaceful step.

The president said the trilateral summit meeting in Cairo, which will be held with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Jordanian King Husayn, will be devoted to supporting the Palestinian positions. President 'Arafat thanked the Egyptian and Jordanian leaders for supporting the Palestinian rights.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO To Open Gaza Office 'Soon'

NC1902140596 Paris AFP in English 1243 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, Gaza Strip, Feb 19 (AFP)—The PLO executive committee is to open an office in autonomous Gaza City, the secretary general of the committee said Monday [19 February].

Jamal al-Surani told AFP the office would open soon but the executive committee would maintain its current headquarters in Tunis. The committee is to hold its next meeting in Gaza City after the 'Id al-Fitr feast starting on Tuesday to mark the end of the Moslem fasting month of Ramadan, he said.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO Executive Committee To Meet in Gaza After 'Id

JN1902132796 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1120 GMT 19 Feb 96

[Report by 'Adil al-Za'nun in Gaza]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Jamal al-Surani, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee, has announced that the Executive Committee will meet here in the homeland after the 'Id al-Fitr holidays. Al-Surani said that a number of important topics will be discussed, including the Israeli settlement operations, the expropriation of Palestinian lands, and the unresolved issue of crossings and safe routes. The PLO Executive Committee will also discuss the military siege imposed by the Israeli occupation authorities. It will discuss the next phase of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, which will include talks on Jerusalem, settlements, refugees, and borders.

Al-Surani said the Executive Committee will discuss convening the Legislative Council, calling for a Palestine National Council meeting, and forming a cabinet. The committee will also discuss a number of agenda items. The meeting will be a continuation of the meetings that began in al-'Arish on 5 February. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' on Reaching Final Agreement, Drafting Constitution

TA1802141796 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 9

[Interview with Ahmad Quray', member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and head of the Palestinian negotiating delegation, by correspondent Muhammad Abu-Khudayr; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Abu-Khudayr] How do you envisage the role of the Legisla-

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tive Council in the coming phase in which fundamental issues regarding the final stage, such as Jerusalem, the settlements, the refugees, and the right of return, will be discussed?

[Quray'] As far as Jerusalem is concerned, we have a clear and irrevocable plan. Jerusalem is occupied Palestinian land from which Israel must withdraw. This is a firm and unalterable position. So far, we have not signed a peace treaty, but a Declaration of Principles which could lead to a peace treaty. We signed the Gaza-Jericho agreement only as a confidence-building measure. Recently, we signed a temporary, not permanent, interim accord. We will sign a peace treaty if we reach agreement on the fundamental issues, including the fate of Jerusalem, the settlements, borders, sovereignty, relations with other countries, our people's right to self-determination, and our right to establish an independent state. These are the issues on which negotiations will be held. A decision on whether to sign a treaty will be made on the basis of these negotiations.

Here, I would like to explain that one should not exaggerate the Legislative Council's role, because parliamentary assemblies do not negotiate but might follow up the negotiations through a negotiating affairs committee. Ultimately, however, they ratify or do not ratify the agreements. They discuss what the negotiations accomplished.

Some have exaggerated the council's role and said that it will hold negotiations. It is the PLO Executive Committee that will be negotiating, and it has the mandate to do so because the PLO is running the negotiations and making the decisions. The PLO, however, might assign one or more members of the National Authority to negotiate. It is common knowledge that the talks will be long and difficult.

As for the settlements, everything that the Israeli side does is null and void, illegal, and totally rejected. We cannot agree to any brick in a settlement, whether in Jerusalem, the West Bank, or the Gaza Strip.

If the Israeli side wants to sign a peace treaty, it must realize that we will not relinquish our rights on our land, our right to self-determination and to the establishment of a state with Jerusalem as its capital, the right of return of the refugees or the compensation of those who do not wish to return, and the end of the existence of the settlements. If we reach agreement on these issues, we will sign a peace treaty. We are not obliged to sign if we do not reach a solution. Let matters, the core of the problem, and the center of the conflict in the region remain unresolved until our Palestinian rights are restored. We seek peace and want to end the conflict, but not at the expense of our rights, nor at any price. No one inside or outside will agree to this.

[Abu-Khudayr] What stage has been reached in drafting the Palestinian constitution?

[Quray'] What is being drawn up might not be a constitution, because normally a constitution is for an independent entity that has total control over its land and citizens. At present, we are in need of and are working on a provisional constitution for the final stage. This constitution will govern relations between the Authority and the people; between the Legislative Council and the Authority; the form of the system, the rule, and the economic regime; and so forth.

This constitution definitely will only be in accordance with our people's aspirations and hopes.

[Abu-Khudayr] When do you expect this provisional constitution to be announced?

[Quray'] One of the priorities of the new Legislative Council is the ratification of this constitution as soon as possible. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Pro-Iran Gazans Arrested for Plotting To Kill 'Arafat

JN1902142196 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] High-level security sources revealed that the Palestinian security forces had recently arrested two Palestinians from the Gaza Strip for planning to assassinate Yasir 'Arafat, head of the Palestinian Authority.

The sources said initial investigations showed that the detained persons were working for Iran and that the Iranians entrusted them with the task of assassinating 'Arafat.

Palestinian Affairs: PA Official Denies Contacts With Israel on Jerusalem Issue

TA1802164296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Palestinians have denied that any official contacts have taken place with Israel on the future of Jerusalem. Reporter Mark Weiss spoke with newly elected council member Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, who is in charge of municipal affairs in the Palestinian Authority [PA]. He asked him if there is any truth in the Likud claims that contacts on Jerusalem have taken place:

[Begin recording] ['Urayqat] No. There have been some meetings, seminars and academic meetings, but

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officially I can say clearly that there haven't been any meetings on the official level, because these negotiations will commence on May, as you know.

[Weiss] Now, the Likud are accusing both sides of wanting to divide Jerusalem. Is this the Palestinian position?

['Urayqat] Well, let me say that, as I said in the press conference, I can't stand guard on the lips of any Israeli official — Likud or otherwise. Jerusalem is an issue that will be negotiated in the final status negotiations. Likud and Labor know very well our stand as far as Jerusalem is concerned. Jerusalem is part of the occupied territories from 1967, but we agreed that we will negotiate it on May 4th. So far, there haven't been any negotiations whatsoever on the issue. They will commence on May 4th.

[Weiss] As far as you are concerned, there can be no final settlement agreement without East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital?

['Urayqat] Well, let me say that the actual negotiations we have entered in four years of negotiations now an interim period [sentence as heard]. Our real serious negotiations are about to commence on May 4th. These negotiations include borders, refugees, Jerusalem, and settlements. These issues within themselves have the variables of failure and success. At the end of the day, at the end of the negotiations on the permanent status, you cannot have peace that will suit only the Israeli desires and wishes and aspirations, and you cannot have peace that will only suit the desires of the Palestinians and the aspirations of the Palestinians. These issues will be negotiated. I hope that Jerusalem will be preserved as a uniqueness of Jerusalem. No one should be able to tell the difference between a Muslim stone and a Jewish stone or a Christian stone. Once a stone decides to expand at the expense of the two others, we are going to have bloodshed. East Jerusalem was occupied in 1967, as was Jericho or Sinai, and we hope that in the final negotiations we can build the peace on the two-states solution that will be satisfactory for Israelis and Palestinians [word indistinct] in the future. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Husayni Reacts to Israeli Move on Orient House

NC1902190696 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The PLO has called on the countries of the world to challenge the Israeli attempts to close down the Orient House in Jerusalem. Israeli Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal had earlier declared a ban on foreign delegations' visits to the Orient House, which is considered a symbol of the official Palestinian existence in Jerusalem. [passage omitted]

In response to a question by our correspondent Nabil al-Khatib at the Orient House, Faysal al-Husayni [official in charge of Jerusalem affairs in the Palestinian Authority] said:

[Begin al-Husayni recording] We hope that the Israeli Government will be wiser than to do such a thing and that Mr. Shahal will be wiser in addressing this issue because such a measure will be a very serious blow to the political peace process. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Sha'th on Rafah Airport, Tripartite Summit

NC1802114196 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Interview with Dr. Nabil Sha'th, member of the Palestinian Council, by Muhammad al-Aswad in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Aswad] We have with us today Dr. Nabil Sha'th, member of the new Palestinian Legislative Council and the official in charge of negotiations with Israel on the airport and Palestinian economic enterprises. Welcome, Dr. Sha'th.

[Sha'th] Thank you.

[Al-Aswad] You recently announced that the first Palestinian airport will be inaugurated in Rafah in May. Could you tell us how much work has been done so far and when it will become operational?

[Sha'th] The airport is the first Palestinian gateway linking an independent Palestinian economy to the world economy through the flow of individuals and goods. We agreed under the Gaza-Jericho agreement in Cairo to build this airport as soon as possible. However, for one and a half years Israel has been stalling things so as not to let us begin construction on the airport, saying that all security matters must be settled with them before the work could begin. We insisted upon beginning construction at the airport, in accordance with the agreement concluded with them. The airport is the first nucleus of Egyptian-Palestinian economic cooperation. The airport is in southern Gaza, near Rafah. In view of its extreme importance, Egypt's National Bank financed us with an $18 million loan to start work at the airport. The Moroccan Civil Aviation Administration is supervising the implementation. Spain will supply us with the technical equipment needed for the airport. Israel has attempted to stop the construction five times. They even deployed Israeli military troops, which

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almost clashed with the Palestinian troops protecting the workers. However, the crisis was avoided at the last minute and we began extensive negotiations. We agreed to continue work at the airport and complete the runway which, according to international specifications, will be 2.7 km long and 50 meters wide. All types of planes will be able to land there. Negotiations are still being held to agree on some points concerning landing. We agreed with Egypt that planes would pass through Egypt's airspace, not Israel's airspace, for landing. I believe that an agreement will be completed within the coming four weeks. In the meantime, work at the airport continues and it will be operational at the end of May.

[Al-Aswad] You said that Israel created some obstacles, mainly for political reasons. Is Israel trying to obstruct construction because it sees the airport as a symbol of Palestinian sovereignty?

[Sha'th] Yes, undoubtedly. There are economic considerations as well. Israel is doing its best to obstruct Palestinian-Israeli economic ties. At the Rafah crossing point, which we struggled to open, Israel does not allow more than 20 Egyptian trucks per day to cross into Palestinian territory, while more than 2,000 Israeli trucks enter Gaza each day. Israel views the airport as a gateway opening the doors of Egyptian-Palestinian economic relations and an outlet which Palestinian passengers will use to fly all over the world using Cairo airport, instead of Ben-Gurion Airport—the only airport Israel wants the Palestinians to use, for monopoly and hegemony purposes. Thus, the airport is important both politically and economically.

[Al-Aswad] How much freedom of movement will passengers enjoy at Rafah airport to go to Gaza?

[Sha'th] This indeed reflects the conflict with Israel. Israel might not object to placing the airport under its control, but we completely reject this. We do not want Israeli hegemony on liberated Palestinian land under the pretext of security. We tell the Israelis that, according to the agreement, it is their right to have an Israeli presence in the airport to guarantee that the airport will not be used as a military tool, or as a tool for launching air suicide operations against Israel. However, this Israeli presence should not run counter to Palestinian sovereignty and control, or affect the movement or freedom of travel from and to the airport as outlined by international regulations regarding airports.

[Al-Aswad] Dr. Sha'th, we should discuss the Palestinian-Israeli peace track. It seems that this track needs to be promoted. During a news conference held jointly with King Husayn in Cairo, President Husni Mubarak called for a tripartite summit between President Mubarak, King Husayn, and President 'Arafat. How do you view this call?

[Sha'th] The call is completely positive and was welcomed by brother President Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] during his first meeting with the elected members of the Palestinian Legislative Council. This call is extremely necessary to put Arab and international pressure on Israel to force it to proceed with the peace process and implement the provisions of the peace agreement. We hope that this summit will be held as soon as possible. I believe it will be held soon after 'Id al-Fitr, God willing.

[Al-Aswad] The decision has been made to hold early Israeli elections. These elections will be held almost simultaneously with the start of the negotiations between you and Israel over the final status. Will this have any impact on the negotiations, and what are the dimensions of this impact?

[Sha'th] The negotiations over the final status are supposed to begin during the first week of May, while the Israeli elections will be held during the last week of May. No doubt, the Israeli elections will have an effect. In other words, the meetings about the negotiations over the final status will begin as slated, but the Israelis will not make them serious before the end of the elections. The negotiations might be interrupted for one month by the elections, but they will continue later.

[Al-Aswad] Thank you, Dr. Sha'th.

[Sha'th] You are welcome.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Allows 154 PNC Members To Return

JN1802165296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Salim al-Za'nun, acting speaker of the Palestine National Council [PNC], has asserted that Israel today allowed 154 PNC members to return to the homeland.

Palestinian Affairs: Cabinet Discusses Israeli Settlements, Military Closure

JN1802092596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers called for a national conference in Bethlehem next Thursday to confront the settlement issue. The council rejected all the Israeli excuses designed to peddle settlement schemes.

The Council ended its weekly session yesterday under President Yasir 'Arafat. The Council discussed Israeli

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violations of the Palestinian-Israeli agreements. It also had detailed discussions on the establishment of new settlements, the expansion of the other settlements, the opening of bypass roads, and the imposition of the Israeli military siege on the Palestinian territories and the estimated $6 million in daily losses resulting from this siege.

President 'Arafat briefed the council members on the Egyptian-Jordanian invitation to a tripartite Palestinian-Egyptian-Jordanian summit that will be held in the next few days.

The Council also discussed several administrative issues and made the necessary decisions and recommendations.

Palestinian Affairs: Islamic Jihad Confirms Nonpolitical Dialogue With PA

TA1802114896 Jerusalem AL-QUDS in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 6

[Interview with Shaykh Nafidh 'Azzam, member of the Islamic Jihad Political Bureau, by unidentified correspondent in Gaza; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [AL-QUDS] Are you holding meetings with the Authority [PA]?

['Azzam] Yes. Periodic meetings are being held, but these meetings do not fall within the framework of a political dialogue, because we and the Authority stand on two completely different political bases. These meetings are field meetings designed to resolve outstanding and unforeseen problems and prevent these problems from spreading.

[AL-QUDS] What about your relations with Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]? What stage has the merger plan reached?

['Azzam] We consider the unity of the Islamic movement a strategic goal. We have said this from the outset, and our teacher and leader, Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, may God be pleased with him, emphasized this. He devoted a great deal of his time and effort to promoting this goal, both when he was in Palestine and after he was deported. For us, this issue neither serves a specific interest nor represents an impulsive tactic but is the core of our strategy. Our relations with Hamas are much better now. Efforts were exerted by Dr. Fathi to bridge the gap. Ramadan 'Abdallah [Shalah], the new secretary general, is currently trying to assume this task. We always aspire to reach a higher level in relations between ourselves and Hamas, because we believe that the same challenges confront us both and that we and Hamas have a joint interest in coordinating more in order to confront those challenges.

[AL-QUDS] But there are differences between you and Hamas. How will such differences be resolved?

['Azzam] Undoubtedly, there are differences between Hamas and the Islamic Jihad, but we are doing our utmost to minimize or set aside these differences. We are trying with all power to coordinate efforts with the brothers in Hamas. They have their own interpretations and views on numerous issues, and we have viewpoints that may differ on some issues, but until this moment the positions of the brothers in Hamas regarding basic and fundamental issues have been good and firm. We hope that these positions will continue.

[AL-QUDS] Are deliberations under way to set up a political party stemming from the Islamic Jihad Movement?

['Azzam] This issue, from our viewpoint, is extremely premature. We do not oppose the principle of a political party, but a number of conditions must be met. For example, it is impossible to form a political party unless there is real and full independence. It is totally impossible to establish a political party when the occupation still exists in vast areas of the Palestinian territories. A political party cannot be set up unless there is real political stability. To date, this matter has not been realized. Certain conditions must exist in order to establish a political party. Those conditions do not exist at this time. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: Ghawshah Denies Secret Agreement To Stop Operations

JN1802120096 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] Ibrahim Ghawshah, Hamas Movement [Islamic Resistance Movement] official spokesman, denied reports that a secret agreement was signed between the movement and Israel to postpone the jihad operations until after the Israeli elections. He said these reports are unfounded in part and parcel.

In a statement to AL-MAJD, Ghawshah said the movement is committed to its position, which rejects any dialogue or negotiations with the Zionists. He noted that these reports are being leaked at a time when the Palestinian Authority is helping the Zionists liquidate the mujahidin.

Ghawshah also said that Shim'on Peres' statements on a deal to release Shaykh Ahmad Yasin in exchange for amending the Palestinian National Charter is a deceptive maneuver to circumvent the national dimension of the mujahid shaykh's detention.

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Ghawshah stressed that Shaykh Yasin and Hamas Movement reject any conditions attached to the shaykh's release.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Official Denies Request for Habash's Return

JN1702153096 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1500 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mahir al-Tahir, member of the Political Bureau of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP], denied in Damascus today that the PFLP has requested the return of its secretary general, George Habash, to the self-rule areas. Al-Tahir drew a distinction between the right to return and the participation in the Palestine National Council meetings.

Palestinian Affairs: PFLP Denies Statements on Habash's Repatriation

JN1802191996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] has denied the statements made by Riyad al-Maliki, PFLP spokesman in the occupied West Bank, and asserted that al- Maliki does not represent it and is not a spokesman for the PFLP.

Al-Maliki said earlier that the PFLP's demand that its leader, George Habash, return to the Palestinian territories are a positive step. He added that Dr. Habash at first rejected an Israeli proposal that all Palestine National Council [PNC] members in exile return home. However, Habash finally agreed to place his name on the list which was submitted to the PNC speakership following urgent requests by the PFLP Political Bureau and by PFLP members in the Palestinian territories.

Palestinian Affairs: Habash Said Decided Against Returning to PA Areas

TA1902113796 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 19 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Yosi Torpstein]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] George Habash will not come to the Palestinian Authority [PA] areas despite the inclusion of his name in the list of Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine [PFLP] officials who are Palestine National Council [PNC] members — a list to be submitted for Israel's approval. This was said yesterday by senior PFLP sources.

The sources claim that Habash firmly insists on coming back only if he is permitted to return to Lod as part of the right of return of all Palestinians living abroad. Many of the PFLP's leaders will also remain abroad under the excuse that the links with Palestinians living abroad must be preserved.

At the same time, leaders such as 'Abd-al-Rahim Malluh, member of the PFLP's political bureau, plan to settle in the PA areas if this is approved by Israel. [passage omitted]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Receives DFLP Delegation

JN1702184096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received a delegation from the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP] at the Presidential Office in Gaza today. The delegation handed President 'Arafat a list of the names of 25 Palestine National Council [PNC] members from the DFLP and a list of the names of 115 DFLP [initial version said PNC] members who are DFLP leaders and cadres demanding to return to the homeland.

In statements to Voice of Palestine radio, 'Abd-al-Hamid Jayyab, a member of the DFLP Central Committee, said that the meeting was positive and that the DFLP will take part in the municipal elections. The member of the DFLP Central Committee said that President 'Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres discussed the return of DFLP Secretary General Nayif Hawatimah.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Spokesman on Dialogue, Elections

JN1902185996 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 25

[Interview with Mahmud al-Zahhar, spokesman for Hamas, by 'Abd-al-Hayy Duwaydar in Gaza; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Duwaydar] The relationship between Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Palestinian Authority [PA] is taking a new course. Is the current climate affecting this relationship, and what are the points of agreement and disagreement between the two sides?

[Al-Zahhar] You know well what took place during the Cairo dialogue between Hamas and the PA. We all agreed to prohibit internecine fighting, and we are determined to honor the agreement and we want to see the PA honor it now and in the future.

During that dialogue, we disagreed over the elections, but the authority made two proposals. It demanded our full participation in the elections, and it used all

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its weight to make all parties take one course. It also answered many of our questions.

The Authority also urged us to leave people to exercise their electoral right — a proposal of which we approved. It also urged us not to force anybody to boycott the elections. Our policy in this regard does not conflict with our true religion, and we tell people to do what is right.

Frankly speaking, our dialogue was a responsible one, and we talked to the authority in a brotherly and friendly spirit.

The Authority also told us that military action embarrasses the PA because it obstructs the redeployment of the Israeli forces and the implementation of the agreement. We asked: Do you believe we enjoy the occupation? We offered many martyrs to attain freedom, and we want to reap the fruits for which we have paid a high price. The autonomy does not meet our minimum requirement. The military action is not used against the authority or its project. Any fair person knows that the military action was useful for the authority during the negotiations.

But how can we regain Jerusalem, realize the repatriation of millions of Palestinian refugees, and end the Israeli settlement process?

We looked forward to real elections that represent the Palestinians, but in our opinion what happened was not so. What happened was elections for administering the affairs of the self-rule and making legislation for it and not for the Palestinian people and the Palestinian state.

We should not forget that Israel still controls all borders with the Gaza Strip, and no one—regardless of his political identity—can enter of leave Gaza without Israeli approval, and the same applies to the West Bank. Israel continues to hold thousands of Palestinians hostages on which it can blackmail during the next phases of negotiations. However, we refused to take part in the elections.

As for building the homeland, we take part in this effort and will continue to do so, but we refuse to take part in something that conflicts with our faith and our political view. However, the same as we did not prevent anyone from participating in the elections, we will not prevent anyone from participating in the next elections. I think this is a responsible position.

[Duwaydar] But some of previous Hamas members or those who support Hamas participated in the elections. It is also said that these people have been part of Hamas?

[Al-Zahhar] Several Islamic movements have been part of Hamas—the brothers in the Islamic Jihad, the late Fathi al-Shaqaqi, and 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Awdah were from Hamas. If you are referring to the Islamic Salvation Party, it was formed by a group of Islamists who used to meet and discuss specific issues, but they were not part of Hamas. These brothers said they wanted to form a party and they obtained a license. What governs them is the same that governs Hamas; namely, Islam. Hence, we cannot say that these practices are negative, but the enemies of Islam, especially the West, portray Muslims as enemies of democracy. The objective of these campaigns against us is to harm Islam.

[Duwaydar] But some people talk about differences within the Hamas Movement over dealing with the PA?

[Al-Zahhar] It is natural that there are many different opinions and viewpoints about means of tackling some issues. No one can deny the existence of differences within the Islamic movement. However, the general framework is Islam. I would like to say that differences in tactics lead to a sound decision. However, there are no splits among us. If one person, or even one hundred persons, left a movement which has the size of Hamas, then we cannot say that there are splits within the movement. We have not thus far heard of such number of people. Frankly speaking, you do not have to worry about a movement whose compass is Islam.

[Duwaydar] Excuse me, Dr. Mahmud al-Zahhar, but there are other people who talk about differences or let us say contradictions in the political stands between the Hamas leaderships inside and outside the occupied territories. How true is this?

[Al-Zahhar] There can be differences among brothers. However, these differences have not reached and will not reach the point of a conflict. This is because we sit and talk, and the majority decision is binding to the minority. This is our internal policy; namely, agreement is better than disagreement regardless of whether you are right or wrong. When we disagree on the means, this is something logical and very natural. However, we do not disagree on our strategic objective. I can reassure all our brothers in the Arab and Islamic worlds that Hamas is in good shape. It might become strong or weak, but it will continue to exist as long as Islam exists.

[Duwaydar] There is a question posing itself strongly now: What will your position be in the Syrian arena after Syria and Israel reach an agreement? Will the movement leave Syria?

[Al-Zahhar] We do not interfere in the affairs of Syria or any other Arab or Islamic state. We maintain good relations with all the Arab states despite contradictions in political stands. Consequently, we have no problem

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with any Arab regime. Our political objective is to liberate Jerusalem. When we were expelled from Palestine, we continued to live on the border, and if we are expelled from Syria, although I do not expect or wish this, we will find another place. We will not lose much because all that we have there are offices only, and because Hamas' true weight is in Palestine. This is our strategy. Contrary to the PLO, we did not establish bases and big facilities in the Arab arena, because these can be used to pressure us. Therefore, our body and heart are planted in Palestine, and we work in many other places to close ranks and serve the objectives of the Arab and Islamic nations.

Palestinian Affairs: Airport Work To Resume; Sha'th Views Jordan Confederation

JN1602171096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Palestinian and Israeli sides have agreed to resume work at the Gaza International Airport. This agreement was reached in a meeting today between Dr. Nabil Sha'th, member of the Legislative Council, and Oren Shahor, coordinator of the occupation's work in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The participants agreed that the special agreements on building the airport should be worked out in the next few weeks. Dr. Sha'th said the airport's runway will be completed in May, and that Palestinian aircraft will begin using the airport then.

Sha'th added that the talks on building a port and promoting the agreements on the crossing points will begin with Israel after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday.

In another development, Dr. Sha'th has said that a confederation can be established between Palestine and Jordan based on a free and voluntary choice by the Palestinian and Jordanian peoples. He asserted that such a confederation should be established between two independent states.

In a statement to our correspondent in Gaza, Sha'th added: We support the highest degree of cooperation and coordination with our Jordanian brothers.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Confers With French Minister in Gaza

JN1902085296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat received Michel Barnier, French minister delegate of European affairs and deputy foreign minister, at the presidential office in Gaza yesterday evening. The French official conveyed to him an oral message from the French president. Talks dealt with the latest developments of the peace process in light of the Israeli violations of agreements and the settlement drive, in addition to bilateral relations. The French official stressed his country's support for the peace process and its desire to promote bilateral relations.

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Algeria

Algeria: 2 Car Bombs Kill 12, Injure 32

LD1802234796 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The hands of terrorism have struck again against unarmed citizens on the eve of the blessed Id al-Fitr. Two booby-trapped cars exploded in Ain-Nadja and Ain Taya and have killed 12 people and injured 32.

[Nacef] Yes, on the eve of the blessed Id al-Fitr, criminal hands have again struck savagely against the unarmed sons of the people.

A booby-trapped car, parked in the middle of residential quarter in Ain Nadja district, exploded at about 1850 this evening — a few moments after the sunset call for prayers.

According to a statement by the security services, four people were killed and 18 injured by the explosion. Material damage was caused to nearby buildings.

Another booby-trapped car exploded in the municipality of Ain Taya at about 1900 this evening. Eight people were killed and 14 injured, the security services statement added.

Emergency services and security services are still present in the places where the two explosions occurred to offer the necessary help to the injured.

Algeria: 'Authoritized' Agency Cited on 2 Car Bombings

LD1802231496 Paris Radio France International in French 2300 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] We have just heard that there have been two car bomb attacks in Algeria. One exploded in the district of Ain-Nadja in Algiers. Four people were killed and 18 injured.

Another car bomb exploded on the same day at around 1900 in Ain Taya, in the eastern part of the capital, killing eight people and injuring 14.

This is what the official agency APS has announced. It is the only agency authorized to give such news in Algeria from now on.

Algeria: Zeroual Promises Reprisals After Bomb Attacks

LD1902112896 Paris France-Inter Radio Network in French 1000 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The day after a double car bomb attack which claimed 12 lives in Algeria, President Zeroual has promised reprisals. These new terrorist acts took place just as a presidential message was being broadcast on radio and television on the occasion of the feast at the end of Ramadan ['Id al-Fitr] — a message in which the Algerian head of state called on Algerians to show solidarity and reconciliation to help the country emerge from its political and economic crisis.

Algeria: President Urges National Unity to Fight 'Terrorism'

LD1902125596 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] [In an address to the nation last night on the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr,] President Zeroual said:

[Begin Zeroual recording] Today we are going through difficult times. We must, more than ever before, bring our potential together and unify our efforts in the service of national reform that has already begun and whose final aim is to retrieve security, stability, and prosperity for all Algerians. [end recording]

Liamine Zeroual affirmed his solidarity with the families of the victims of terrorism and with those sections of the population that are living in miserable economic and social conditions.

[Begin Zeroual recording] To the families beset by the national tragedy of Algeria, I express the full sympathy of the nation and its firm support. And to those among us who are facing difficulties resulting from the national economic crisis, I reaffirm, on behalf of the Algerian people, that national solidarity and social justice, which represent fundamental values for our nation, will be mobilized to help them.

Likewise, I reaffirm to you today that the fight against this vile phenomenon [of terrorism], which is completely alien to the lofty values of our holy religion, will continue most firmly until the enemies of the Algerian people are finally eliminated. [end recording]

Algeria: South Africa's Bid 'To Interfere' in Internal Affairs Protested

LD1802195496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement released today by the Foreign Ministry announced that the Algerian Government has received with great astonishment the news concerning the reception President Mandela has granted in the Cape to one of those responsible for the destabilization of stability in Algeria, and one of the perpetrators of terrorist crimes committed against the Algerian people.

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The same source explained that the position of the South African authorities, by this behavior, which the least can be described as unfriendly, is astonishing, particularly because the two countries have close relations, in addition to the fact that Algeria had never in the past been hesitant to undertake its duty in supporting the African National Congress and in standing in solidarity with it in its struggle to achieve the ideals for which Nelson Mandela had devoted his life.

Therefore, the source adds, the Algerian authorities register with great regret an unacceptable attempt to interfere in the internal Algerian affairs and renew its rejection of any endeavor, regardless of its source, that seeks to interfere in the sovereign course of the national process to get out of the crisis.

The statement concludes that the Algerian ambassador in Pretoria has been given instructions to initiate an effort with the highest level of South African authorities to present a strong protest in this regard.

Algeria: Further on 'Controversy' Over Mandela-Haddam Meeting

LD1902134196 Paris Radio France International in French 0730 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Controversy has erupted between Algeria and South Africa following the revelations regarding a meeting held recently by Nelson Mandela and Anouar Haddam, the FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] leader [title as heard]. Farida Ayari brings the details.

[Ayari] According to Arab diplomatic sources, last Thursday in Cape Town President Nelson Mandela, accompanied by Thabo Mbeki, his vice president, received the FIS's representative in the United States. According to these same sources, Anouar Haddam and several members of the FIS are still in South Africa on the invitation of QUIBLA, a fundamentalist group based in Cape Town. It was nevertheless from Washington that Anouar Haddam issued a communique announcing that he had asked President Mandela to take the matter to the OAU and to help find a global political solution to the Algerian crisis.

Algiers' response was rapid and scathing: it sees in it — I quote — an unacceptable attempt to interfere. This audience granted to an Islamist leader comes a few days after an official visit to Algeria by the South African foreign minister [Alfred Nzo], who had celebrated the close relations between the two countries. Farida Ayari, Johannesburg, RFI.

Algeria: Public Workers To Receive Back Pay

LD1802195696 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Workers who have not been paid by public sector enterprises will be able to get wages due to them from banking institutions starting today. This is in connection to the head of government's order dated 6 January 1996.

The banks have started to pay wages on behalf of the 260 public sector enterprises which have drawn lists of wages for 47,137 workers. The number in the lists is expected to rise sharply. [passage omitted]

Algeria: Curfew Lifted in Algiers, Other Provinces

LD1802130296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0900 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Interior Ministry announced that the curfew in force in Algiers and the provinces of Blida, Tipasa, 'Ain Defla, Chlef, Boumerdas, Bouira, M'Sila, Medea, and Djelfa is to be lifted as from 'Id [al-Adha] day [marking the end of Ramadan].

To facilitate the task of the security forces, citizens are required to be vigilant when travelling at night and to obey all the control operations of the security forces.

Algeria: Security Forces Kill 29 'Criminals'

LD1702233496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement issued by the security services said that security forces killed 29 criminals during various search operations in Algiers, Blida, Relizane, Oum El Bouaghi, Bouira, Laghouat, Tebessa, Ain Defla, Setif, Boumerdes, and Saida. The statement added that during these operations, the security forces managed to confiscate a substantial quantity of weapons.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak Addresses Army Troops, Views Egypt's Role in Region

NC2002121496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1138 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Ismailia, 20 Feb (MENA)— President Muhammad Husni Mubarak declared that the country's greatest challenge is to build up an economic power capable of carrying Egypt into the next century. He explained that this can be done by improving the performance of political, economic, and social institutions.

During a meeting with his sons the commanders, officers, and soldiers of the Armed Forces, President

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Mubarak said that the state's executive, local, and partisan institutions are pooling their efforts to provide a better living standard for the people and place Egypt in its appropriate place on the world map.

The president reviewed the changes in the Middle East and Egypt's pivotal role in all the region's political, economic, and social affairs. He also commented on issues concerning national tasks in domestic and foreign affairs.

President Mubarak spoke after attending a breakfast banquet following his performance of 'Id al-Fitr prayers at the 2d Army's Command Headquarters with a number of Armed Forces officers and troops. [passage omitted]

Egypt: Al-Baz Says Syrian-Israeli Talks on Verge of Agreement

NC1602222096 Cairo MENA in Arabic
2157 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 16 Feb (MENA)—Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, has stated that the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations are proceeding seriously and that both parties are about to agree on the points of disagreement between them, particularly the security arrangements. In a statement to be published in AL-AHRAM's 17 February issue, al-Baz expressed his hope that the negotiations will continue between the two parties with the current spirit and earnestness even after the Israeli elections in May so that they may work out an integrated framework for an agreement this year.

Al-Baz pointed out that progress on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks is not enough without progress on the Palestinian track, because a comprehensive solution means progress on all fronts. Regarding Egypt's view of regional cooperation, he said that the Egyptian view is firm and maintains that any move must first be made on the Arab level before delving into talk of a Middle East market or Mediterranean relations.

Egypt: Official Restates 'Firm, Clear' Position on Iraqi Unity

NC1702160896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1418 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Feb (MENA) — Egypt today reiterated its firm and clear position on the need to preserve Iraq's unity and territorial integrity. An official diplomatic source announced some people's allegations to the contrary are totally fictitious and untrue.

The diplomatic source added that Egypt has frequently proclaimed, in words spoken by President Husni Mubarak most recently during his news conference at the conclusion of the Egyptian-Jordanian talks last Thursday [15 February], its clear position on this issue and its firm support for Iraq's unity and territorial integrity.

The source said Egypt wishes to see an end to the fraternal Iraqi people's hardships, but, at the same time, it rejects any meddling in their internal affairs.

Egypt: No Reduction in Country's Oil Output if Iraq Rejoins Market

NC1702154896 Cairo MENA in English
1327 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Feb 17 (MENA) — Minister of Petroleum, Dr. Hamdi al-Banbi, said today that all oil producing countries inside and outside OPEC, should shoulder their reponsibilities to maintain the sale prices of crude and realise stability on the world oil market and deal with the new situation which will arise when Iraq resumes exporting its oil under a possible oil-for-food agreement with the United Nations. The minister was replying to reporters questions on his expectations about prices and crude production if Iraq returned to the world oil market. Dr. al-Banbi said Egypt has always been keen to stabilise its oil production at 900,000 barrels daily in spite of new oil discoveries during the past five years. The minister explained that this commitment was with the aim of contributing to the stabilisation of the world oil market and in solidarity with decisions of OPEC countries and serving the common interests of producers and consumers. Dr. al-Banbi explained that Egypt cannot reduce its oil production from 900,000 barrels per day in case Iraq entered the world oil market again because that would mean shrinking Egypt's quota on the world market. He called on OPEC and non-OPEC countries which raised their production after Iraq was banned from exporting oil to cooperate considering that the absence of Iraq was temporary.

The minister stressed that it was important to call the ministerial council of OPEC to an emergency meeting when Iraq resumed exports in order to take a proper decision to preserve the interests of oil-producing countries, realise stability on the world oil market and prevent a deterioration in the prices of crude.

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Egypt: Daily Hails Cairo Tripartite Summit, Mubarak's Efforts

NC1802095096 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 0525 GMT 18 Feb 96

[From the press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an editorial titled "The Tripartite Summit and Arab Interest," AL-JUMHURIYAH says: Cairo is preparing to host the tripartite summit between President Husni Mubarak, Jordan's King Husayn, and Palestinian President 'Arafat. According to the paper, the leaders will discuss the Arab situation and developments in the peace process, particularly in the Palestinian track, in light of the Israeli government's decision to call for early elections. AL-JUMHURIYAH adds that this Israeli step has cast shadows on the final stage of negotiations on the remaining occupied Arab territories.

The paper says that this summit, which is the fruit of the important meeting between Mubarak and Husayn in Cairo on Thursday [15 February], offers hope to the Arab citizen, who wants peace and stability. Arabs want an end to divisive elements so they can enter the 21st century armed with the necessary capabilities that will enable them to hold a prominent position in the world community.

AL-JUMHURIYAH notes that the summit will endeavor to provide a suitable atmosphere that will allow the negotiations to proceed in a serious manner and give practical support to the Palestinian people and its national government, particularly following the Palestinian elections, which were held in a democratic atmosphere. The summit will also endeavor to help the Palestinian people put in place basic infrastructure in various fields. The paper affirms that this task is not an easy one.

The paper notes that it is natural for the leaders to discuss the joint cooperation, investment of available capabilities, and organic ties between Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine. They will discuss the coordination of major projects for the next stage, particularly the Middle East Bank, which will begin operation in Cairo soon, for the sake of investment and development.

AL-JUMHURIYAH says it is certain that the tripartite summit will strongly reflect the effective role being played by President Mubarak and Egyptian diplomacy in the peace process, which serves higher Arab interests and is about to bear fruit. Cairo is always available to help achieve the Arabs' interests, regain their solidarity, and fend off the ghost of differences which have for so long obstructed the march of Arab renaissance.

Egypt: Israeli Minister's Remarks Said To Show 'Ghetto Mentality'

NC1702084296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0705 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Feb (MENA)—AL-AHRAM noted that Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's remarks to a group of American Jews that Israel is living in a villa in the wilderness and that it is like a civilized fort in a different environment reveal a ghetto mentality and a sense of arrogance. They also show that Baraq and his likes are not convinced of the idea of a new Middle East and regional cooperation.

In a commentary published in the Saturday [17 February] issue, the paper emphasizes that these remarks also reveal the confusion that marks the Israeli mentality following the start of the settlement process. The failure to come to terms with the peace ideas, which conflict with the ghetto mentality and a sense of isolationism resulting either from fear or arrogance, normally lead to contradictory statements that on many occasions reach the point of delirium, the paper adds.

The paper says that although these remarks smack of isolationism and arrogance, they ignore the deteriorating internal realities in Israel, whose record of human rights abuses is fraught with evidence, not only against the Arabs, but also against Jews for ethnic and ritual considerations. The paper adds: Questioning the Jewishness of the Falasha Jews and the recent scandal about their blood provide the best proof of this.

Libya

Libya: JANA Questions Clinton's Claims of Security, Stability

LD1702084796 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0720 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 17 Feb — The U.S. President has claimed that his policy has contributed to the finding of what he termed a secure and a more peaceful world and has helped in strengthening the American economy.

Here we ask: Where is the world the U.S. President is talking about and which American policy has made it secure and more peaceful and where is the American economy that cannot be shaken by problems and chronic crises? The U.S. President, who made these statements at a Democratic Party meeting devoted to fund raising for electioneering propaganda, realizes before anyone else that the policy which America follows and implements was and still is the main factor for the lack of security and the undermining of stability in many areas

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of the world, as it has directly contributed to the sufferings of nations by creating hotbeds of conflict, crises, and tragedies as a result of its organized, official terrorism against states and the interference into their internal affairs which it has carried out and still does.

It suffices here to refer to the death serial which America carried out against the Somali people by invading and occupying their land and massacring the Somalis and using in the process the most modern weapons against them. Then it invaded Haiti and practiced killing and destruction against the unarmed people of Haiti. Also, [there are] its conspiracies against the peoples of Cuba, North Korea, and other states and its threat to carry out military invasion against peoples who refuse to bargain over their liberty and honor. The strongest evidence of the destablization of the world and the threatening of peoples' security lies in America's backing for and protection of the Israeli terrorists and its covering up of the crimes of official terrorism, which is practiced by the Israelis against the Palestinian Arab people and against the villages and towns of southern Lebanon.

As for within America itself, the results of American policy are reflected in the deteriorating security situation and the lack of stability and is exposed by the worsening economic situation, which has led to the breaking up of the life of the American citizen, transforming his life into an unbearable hell. The brittleness and weakness of the American economy made about 1 million Americans unemployed one day, because the American administration no longer had the necessary funds for wages or to spend on its establishments. This is in addition to 25 million Americans who are unemployed, 30 million who are poor and cannot find their daily food, inflation, trade deficit, bankruptcy of major companies, and other economic ailments which are eating into American society. Where, then, are security and stability, which the policy of the U.S. President has contributed towards strengthening, inside and outside America, as he claims?

Libya: Official Urges Greece, Turkey To Exercise Restraint

LD1902134396 Tripoli JANA in Arabic 0900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tripoli, 19 Feb (JANA) — Brother Muhammad al-Zanati, secretary of the General People's Congress, proceeding from the firm relations linking the Great Jamahiriyah with Greece and Turkey, sent a memorandum to the president of the Greek Chamber of Deputies urging both Greece and Turkey to exercise restraint in the dispute between the two countries over the sovereignty of Imia island in the Aegean Sea. The following is the text of the memorandum:

To: Apostolos Kaklaminis, president of the Chamber of Deputies of the Greek Republic.

We are deeply concerned about the tension currently existing between the Republic of Greece and the Turkish Republic, countries whose friendship we treasure and are very eager to preserve by virtue of our historic and cultural relations throughout history.

No doubt you remember that in the past the brother leader of the revolution, Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, exerted intensive efforts to diffuse similar apparently insurmountable crises thanks to the wisdom of the officials of the two countries and to the personal ties existing between the brother leader of the revolution, former Greek prime minister Andreas Papandreou, may God restore his health, and the friends in Turkey.

We appeal to you, in Greece and in Turkey, to exercise restraint and overcome the crisis through wisdom and dialogue and by giving priority to neighborly ties and common interests. We appeal to you not to give an opportunity to foreign forces who are interested in weakening Europe and especially the Mediterranean, the cradle of religions and civilizations.

The regrettable stand of the European Parliament toward the crisis creates an atmosphere of confrontation instead of a just and peaceful solution which would safeguard the rights and interests of all concerned. However, the European Parliament's statement is tantamount to an escalation which would take the region back a few centuries. It reminds us of the Crusades which put Europe face to face with Ottoman Turkey, the Arab nation, and the Islamic peoples.

If, together with this, we consider the statement by the former NATO secretary-general, who resigned for known reasons and who considered Islam to be enemy number one after the Soviet Union, then you can imagine our deep concern over the attempts by some quarters to drag the region back into the era of confrontation, wars, bloodshed, and destruction at a time when we would have thought that the high price and cruel lessons would ensure victory to the forces of good, peace, cooperation, and dialogue, not to the forces of evil, wars, estrangement, and confrontation. We would not like to see Greece, a nation with a deep-rooted civilization, fall into this trap and become the victim of a trick by external forces that pretend to harbor friendship to both sides and at the same time instil their poison and sedition to set countries against one another in order to weaken and then control all of them, their resources, their wealth, and their self-determination. Regrettably, the forces of evil are engaging in this with great success in several parts of the world, as you know and as confirmed everyday by news reports.

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The Great Jamahiriyah is fully prepared, at all levels, to undertake whatever is required to help overcome this crisis in the interest of the two friendly peoples and of the region as a whole, which, we are confident, is at the forefront of the attention of our friends the leaders of both Greece and Turkey.

We wish you and your two friendly countries all progress and prosperity.

Morocco

Morocco: Millions of 'Faked Dollars' Confiscated

LD1702130796 Rabat MAP in English 1238 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Feb. 17 (MAP) — Two Guinean nationals were arrested lately in Marrakesh, southern Morocco, in possession of five million faked dollars, the National Committee for Struggle Against Smuggling said. The two Guineans, Kourouma Moussa and Camara Mohamed Pinelo, who were arrested on Thursday, pretended that the money came from the looting of a bank in Monrovia, Liberia. The bank notes were tainted black to facilitate their transport through border check points, the two persons said.

Koumoura Moussa tried to leak the faked money in Morocco with the help of an Iraqi national, Hatim Abdelkrim, who is illegally living in Morocco. The Iraqi national would have requested 1 million dollars to do the job.

A large sum of faked dollars were seized in 1993 in Sale (Rabat twin city).

The Moroccan Government launched lately a nationwide campaign against smuggling which enabled so far to bring to court scores of "bigwigs" and even customs agents, most them have been sentenced to prison terms ranging from 8 months to 5 years and to fines amounting in some cases to 85 million dollars.

Parallel to the anti-smuggling campaign, the government launched another campaign to eradicate drug-trafficking in Morocco. Many international drug trafficking networks were dismantled and many drug lords were arrested and sentenced to heavy jail terms and fines.

Sudan

Sudan: SPLA Spokesman Reports Defeat of NIF Forces

EA1602090396 (Clandestine) Voice of the National Democratic Alliance in Arabic 1715 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In a telephone conversation, an official spokesman of the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Movement [SPLM] and the Sudanese Peoples' Liberation Army [SPLA], confirmed that on 7 and 8 February, the National Islamic Front [NIF] forces mounted a massive attack on SPLA positions on the Kit, (Labonck), and Canal Mouth fronts. The SPLA forces succeeded in foiling the attack and inflicting heavy casualties on the NIF forces and the supportive People's Defense Forces [PDF].

In the Kit battlefield, the NIF forces lost 35 men, including three officers called 1st Lieutenant Adam Harun, 1st Lieutenant 'Abd-al-Hadi 'Abd-al-Karim, and 2nd Lieutenant Mahjub Tal'at; 129 were wounded, including Staff Lieutenant Colonel Khalid Hamad Ahmad, 1st Lieutenant Adam 'Abdallah Muhammad Ahmad, 1st Lieutenant Bakri Muhammad Musa, and 2nd Lieutenant Ibrahim Izzat al-Din.

In the battle of (Labonok), the NIF forces lost four of their very important mujahidin, including 'Uthman Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir, the younger brother of President 'Umar Hasan Ahmad al-Bashir. The other three are Muhammad Hasan al-Hajj, Ibrahim Harun, and Adam Ya'qub Musa. On the same front, the NIF forces also lost another 81, most of whom were members of the PDF. On the Canal Mouth front, the NIF forces, supported by Riak Machar's militiamen, were severely routed by the SPLA forces. The NIF forces were commanded by Major Shams al-Din Muhammad. [passage omitted]

Sudan: Finance Minister Discusses Economic Difficulties

JN1902210396 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 9

[Report by Samir al-Hijjawi in Khartoum]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Sudanese Finance Minister 'Abdullahi Hasan Ahmad said that the International Monetary Fund [IMF] and the World Bank do not extend any loans, services, or aid to economic projects in Sudan despite the fact that Sudan has made economic progress and put an end to famine.

Referring to the impact political factors have on economic and financial decisions in Sudan, Ahmad said: It is difficult to separate a politician from an economist. Sudan's debts amount to $13 billion, of which $1.6 billion is due to the IMF. Sudan pays $50 million yearly to the IMF for servicing the debt, while the overall debt interest amounts to $650-$780 million a year. This amount far exceeds the value of all Sudanese exports.

Ahmad added: Sudan has to shoulder the burden of feeding and extending services to 1 million Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees after the international organizations

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suspended assistance to them which amounts to $100 million.

Asked about the Sudanese economy, Ahmad said: Currently, we are carrying out a number of large-scale projects aimed at achieving food security. As for the oil reserves in Sudan, he said: In the middle of 1996 we will begin producing 10,000 barrels per day. This can be increased to 200,000 barrels when capabilities become available.

He did not deny the difficulties facing the Sudanese economy, and said: Per capita income in Sudan is rather low, amounting to less than $500 yearly. Approximately 20 percent of the population, that is 1 million families, are suffering from poverty. He said those earning 30,000 Sudanese pounds (equivalent to 21 Jordanian dinars) are below the poverty line. [passage omitted]

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Bahrain

Bahrain: Security Forces Reportedly Arrest 'Terrorist Group'

JN1902151296 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1400 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 19 Feb (WAKH) — A responsible source in the Bahraini Interior Ministry said that security forces have arrested the terrorist group that detonated a time-bomb at the Meridian Hotel on 17 January and a device at the Diplomat Hotel on 11 February.

In a statement to the GULF NEWS AGENCY, the responsible source said that the security forces made extensive and comprehensive investigations following the incidents. He noted that the intensive efforts led to the rounding up of the terrorist group involved in the two crimes.

The source added that public security forces are still interrogating the members of this group to uncover all the dimensions and circumstances of the two incidents. He said the Interior Ministry will announce within the next few days the names of the group's members and the details related to what they have done against the homeland and the people. He added that the announcement will be made after the interrogation is completed, the evidence is compiled, and the suspects' confessions before the investigating judge have been recorded.

Bahrain: Information Minister on Riots, Iranian Role

NC1702135296 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0610 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Telephone interview with Bahraini Information Minister Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa' in Manama by 'Adil 'Abd al-Tawwab in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] ['Abd-al-Tawwab] What is the truth behind the recent riots in Manama?

[Al-Mutawwa'] Bahrain witnessed some acts that fall in the context of riots or sabotage. But these riots have not affected the sound security situation, nor did they affect the economic situation. There are attempts to terrorize the people and spread panic among the citizens in order to cause confusion and sabotage tourism and the economy. These are the goals of the rioters and saboteurs.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Have these riots ended or are they continuing?

[Al-Mutawwa'] The security situation is sound, thank God. Stability is firm and the security authorities are fully in control. Some incidents might happen occasionally, but the media blows these incidents out of proportion. This is normal. But it will not affect stability and normalcy in the community. Every visitor, resident, and citizen sees for himself that life is proceeding normally and soundly. If a riot or sabotage occurs, it will be normal under the circumstances we are going through and can easily be controlled.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] Have your investigations uncovered the people behind these abominable acts?

[Al-Mutawwa'] We have many confessions and many leads. They will be revealed in due time and during the trials.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] When these incidents broke out, it was said that Iran was behind them. How true are these accusations?

[Al-Mutawwa'] Many Iranian media, particularly the radio, are surely interfering in our internal affairs or are inciting such acts. But I cannot say anything more than at this time.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] What precautions has the Bahraini government taken to confront these incidents and protect the citizens, property, and foreign communities?

[Al-Mutawwa'] The most important precaution is public awareness and the sympathy citizens are showing toward the security authorities and their measures. The second most important thing upon which Bahrain relies is the firm Arab position, as well as the understanding shown by friendly states that understand the meaning of terrorism and the risk it involves. These positions give Bahrain strength to protect its stability. I would like to thank the fraternal Arab states for their support and backing for stability and security in Bahrain. I also thank the Arab League for its firm support for stability and its denunciation of all forms of terrorism and rioting that are spreading all over the world now. I would particularly like to thank Egypt, primarily President Husni Mubarak, for having a positive stance. I would like to thank Arab and fraternal states in the Gulf and the Arab world in general for supporting the security measures the Government of Bahrain took to fight acts of terrorism that target stability and public peace.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] It is said that there is a drive to rejuvenate media cooperation between Egypt and Bahrain. What is the current status of this cooperation?

[Al-Mutawwa'] Media cooperation between Egypt and Bahrain is proceeding along the right course. We always endeavor to enhance that cooperation and bolster coordination. I am in constant contact with his excellency Minister Safwat al-Sharif, the Egyptian informa-

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tion minister. He is a good brother who puts all the Egyptian resources at Bahrain's disposal. With God's help, we will have more coordination and more cooperation in the media sector.

['Abd-al-Tawwab] We thank his excellency the Bahraini information minister.

[Al-Mutawwa'] Thank you sir. I repeat my thanks to Voice of the Arabs, the radio of all Arabs.

Bahrain: Minister Praises Egypt's Position on Recent 'Riots'

JN1702171396 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1140 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 17 Feb (WAKH) — Muhammad Ibrahim al-Mutawwa', Bahraini minister of cabinet affairs and information, has praised the stand adopted by Egypt under the leadership of President Muhammad Husni Mubarak in support of the Bahraini government and people during the recent riots.

In a statement to the Voice of the Arabs today, al-Mutawwa' said that Egypt's backing and support augmented the strength of Bahrain in defending its stability.

The Bahraini minister noted that the riots and disturbances in Bahrain have not affected stability and security in the country, and that life in Bahrain is proceeding normally. He said investigations by the authorities into these incidents have revealed several clues which will be announced at the appropriate time.

On the prospects of media cooperation between Egypt and Bahrain, al-Mutawwa' said that with God's help, the two countries are proceeding toward further coordination and joint work in all fields of information.

Bahrain: Security in Shiite Areas Increased After Protest Calls

NC2002154296 Paris AFP in English 1456 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Feb 20 (AFP)—The authorities deployed tight security around Shiite Muslim areas on Tuesday [20 February] following opposition calls to step up protests at the end of the Ramadan holy month.

Up to 12 jeeps packed with policemen patrolled the small Shiite village of Diraz, just west of the capital Manama, an AFP correspondent reported. More patrols were also seen in other villages like Janussan and Bani Jamrah.

Villagers in Diraz late Monday condemned the mass arrests of mostly Shiite Muslims who are demanding the Sunni Muslim-led government restore the parliament it suspended in 1975.

They warned that violence would escalate if the prisoners were not released.

The authorities said at least 261 people have been arrested since a new wave of unrest erupted in later December following a ban on political gatherings at Shiite mosques.

The opposition said around 2,000 have been arrested.

Patrols were also stepped up in traditional shopping areas in the center of Manama and in the sprawling suburb of Budayah where many foreigners also live.

Meanwhile Bahrainis went to the mosques for morning prayers at the start of the 'Id al-Fitr holiday, which marks the end of the Moslem fasting month of Ramadan.

There was no apparent security increase around many of the mosques in Manama.

Rioting first erupted in December 1994 when the authorities arrested a leading Shiite cleric who called for the restoration of parliament.

At least 13 people were killed in the first four months of the violence, although none has been reported killed in the latest unrest.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Prime Minister Comments on Relations With Jordan

LD1702213996 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1745 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Kuwait, 17 Feb — Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, the heir apparent and prime minister, has expressed optimism that Kuwait will be able to overcome its budget deficit by the end of the year 2000, and said that tackling the deficit will be possible only by carrying out the five-year economic plan laid down by the government. Otherwise, he said, it would take quite a long time to remedy the deficit.

At a meeting today with the editors of Kuwaiti newspapers, the prime minister stressed that Kuwait has always been calling for the restoration of inter-Arab solidarity, but Kuwait was still insisting that reconciliation must be preceded by frankness. Shaykh Sa'd emphasized that Kuwait would not forget the perfidious Iraqi aggression and the savage crimes perpetrated by Iraq against the Kuwaiti people — an aggression that had left a deep wound that would be difficult to forget. He also expressed optimism that relations with Jordan would be restored, and urged Amman to take up practical steps

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that would turn words into deeds aimed at serving the interests of both countries and those of the Arab and Islamic nation.

Shaykh Sa'd added that the Arab nation was passing through a delicate stage which requires from us, Kuwaiti officials, to work toward strengthening inter-Arab solidarity, and to turn a blind eye to any position taken by any fraternal country if we see that this would be in the present and future interest of Kuwait and the Arab nation. The heir apparent also said: Kuwait had not thought that it was required to pay the price of inter-Arab reconciliation, and if the countries that had supported Iraq in its aggression against us showed a wish to have a rapprochement with Kuwait, then we would not obstruct such a move.

At the beginning of the meeting, which was attended by the minister of social affairs and labor, Acting Information Minister Ahmad al-Kulayb, KUNA Director-General Yusuf al-Samit, and Information Ministry Undersecretary Faysal al-Hajji, Shaykh Sa'd explained the steps and measures concerning the future of the relations between Kuwait and Jordan.

Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah said: "The letters exchanged between me and the Jordan's Crown Prince Hasan, and my replies to them, stemmed from our keen interest as officials working as a whole for the interest of Kuwait, Jordan, and many other fraternal countries. The first letter came to explain Jordan's position in all areas. It highlighted the sincere desire of Jordanian officials to have an understanding with the Kuwaiti authorities."

He added: "My reply letter contained the clear and open position of Kuwait, the dimensions of the Iraqi aggression and Jordan's position, and our hopes and aspirations that Jordan would not take a position contrary to many other Arab countries."

The heir apparent and prime minister stressed: "The Arab nation is passing through a critical period that requires from all of us officials that we work toward the strengthening of the Arab ranks and also that we overlook a stand that was adopted by any sister country if we found that it was in the interest of Kuwait and the Arab nation now and in the future. And for the sake of good and for the sake of prosperity in the situations of Arab countries we would not put unattainable conditions nor present demands that could be interpreted, directly or indirectly, as Kuwait not wanting the return of Arab solidarity. However, I find it imperative to reply to those who propose reconciliation and say that mutual frankness comes before reconciliation." He added that Kuwait will not forget the treacherous Iraqi aggression and the crimes committed by its forces. He added: "The wound is deep and it is difficult for any Kuwaiti to forget it."

He expressed his hope that Jordan would appreciate the role of Kuwait in the past, in the present, and in the future, stressing that Kuwait had sought in the past and is seeking always to rally Arab ranks and to unify Arab action for the benefit of the Arab and Islamic nations.

"After the exchange of these letters, we are waiting to see the measures and steps to be taken by Jordanian authorities that will translate words into deeds, aiming to serve the interests of the two countries and the interests of both the Arab and the Islamic nations," he added.

Answering a question on how optimistic he was on a restoration of relations between Kuwait and Jordan, the heir apparent and prime minister said: "I am optimistic following the exchange of letters, and also by the good intentions carried by the latter. He also said that any Arab country that had taken a pro-Iraq position concerning its aggression against Kuwait, and that now wants to return to the right path, then the doors are open before the officials of these countries. "I have said on more than one occasion that Kuwait does not reject such moves," he commented.

Shaykh Sa'd denied that external pressure had dictated the need for discussions on restoration of relations with Jordan, and he said: "As a prime minister, I say that it is in the interest of Kuwait to take any action it deems fit at any time, and Kuwait's response to the letters of the Jordanian crown prince was a Kuwaiti decision, and there was no external political diktat to us."

On whether similar steps would be taken by Kuwait toward the other countries that had supported Iraq, Shaykh Sa'd said: "The Kuwaiti message was clear — Kuwait rejects aggression and its effects, and this message is now known in these countries."

The heir apparent and prime minister also said: "Kuwait is grateful to all the fraternal Arab countries that had rejected Iraqi aggression from its start, showing such a rejection in many ways; Kuwait will not forget such positions, and the Kuwaitis will always remember them." Shaykh Sa'd affirmed that there was no difference in views on a restoring relations with Jordan, and he said: "We have one foreign policy which, when laid down by the government and blessed by the amir, becomes the state policy. There is no policy for the [amir's] al-Bayan palace, and another policy for the Foreign Ministry." Shaykh Sa'd added: We have one policy aimed at preserving Kuwait and its interests in all domains, and anyone mentioning such rumors should know that we work in accordance with a clear, undisputed strategy."

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The heir apparent and prime minister explained that after considering the Jordanian crown prince's letters and noting the desire expressed by the Jordanian side, "we have reached a conviction, and not a change of opinion, that the time has come to reconsider the Kuwaiti position to serve Kuwait's interest at present and in the future." He added that the step which the Kuwaiti Government took toward Jordan was done with the knowledge of the speaker of the National Assembly. The government, he said, would always stress the importance of cooperation with the legislative authority so as to serve the homeland's interest and fateful issues proceeding from the one-family principle.

Answering a question on the extent of cooperation Jordan could give regarding the release of the Kuwait POWs and detainees, the heir apparent said: "I think Jordan has many ways and means of cooperation on this issue." He added that "it was understood from the Jordanian crown prince's letters that they were interested in the issue of POWs, and we wish them success."

The heir apparent and prime minister welcomed any initiative that would lead to the release of Kuwaiti POWs, but he stressed "we refuse any Iraqi condition of going to Baghdad and knocking at their doors in order to release the POWs. We have sacrificed the dear and the cherished to defend Kuwait and its sovereignty, and we have an international resolution for the release of the POWs."

Shaykh Sa'd reiterated "the decision to reconsider our policy toward Jordan in the light of the Jordanian crown prince's letters was a purely Kuwaiti decision, and we have not been subjected to any pressure at all."

On the other hand, the heir apparent and prime minister expressed strong optimism that the budget deficit will be overcome in the next five years. Answering a question in this respect, he said: "I am more than optimistic that we will overcome the budget deficit on the condition that a law is passed by the National Assembly agreeing to the five-year economic plan that will be submitted to it today or tomorrow." He further said: "Unless this plan is carried out, it will be a long time before we overcome the budget deficit." Shaykh Sa'd said that the plan, which ends in the year 2000, had been extensively discussed by the government, and by 2000 the deficit will be a thing of the past. He urged the members of the National Assembly to discuss the five-year plan with a nationalist spirit, and to put the interest of Kuwait first. He said: "I am optimistic that the brother members of the National Assembly will attach a great deal of importance to this plan, and that a law on this will be passed."

Concerning the situation in Bahrain, Shaykh Sa'd stressed that Kuwait supported all that would lead to stability there. He said: "Kuwait stands on the side of fraternal Bahrain, and backs any formula that would restore security and stability there." Shaykh Sa'd denounced the acts of violence and destruction in Bahrain and he said: "The one to pay the price is the Bahraini majority, and there will be no victor and vanquished." He said: "We suffer daily when we hear that a bomb has exploded somewhere in Bahrain, and no one will benefit from a bomb exploding here or a fire shot there."

Kuwait: SAIRI Chairman on Current Situation in Iraq

LD1802191096 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1400 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 18 Feb — Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], said that the United Nation's resolution No. 986 could either lead to the weakening of the Iraqi regime or to strengthening it in the future.

Mr. al-Hakim pointed out in a news conference he held here today that resolution No. 986 was "a double-edged sword which, if applied accurately for the purpose it was drawn up, that is to distinguish between besieging the regime and besieging the Iraqi people, then it would weaken the regime."

He added that "if leniency was shown over the implementation of this resolution, and if the use of some gaps and prerogatives which the United Nations' secretary general had, and were given to him in this resolution, then it [resolution] could be a reason for strengthening Saddam's regime who has been trying to benefit from the monies he was getting from oil to strengthen his apparatus."

In a reply to a question from KUNA over the chances of changing the Iraqi regime this year in comparison with the opportunities for change last year, al-Hakim pointed to "the Iraqi regime's acknowledgment for the first time of the extensive military operations carried out by the opposition when they sent a message to the United Nations. He also pointed to the joining of units from the Iraqi army with opposition units in the operations that took place in the northern region."

Al-Hakim said that "the intervention from some forces has led to the halting of these operations," and also pointed out to the international position in confronting the regime, particularly as represented by the unanimity of the resolutions issued by the United Nations, and the

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development of the position of the Arab Sunnis in Iraq against the regime from the political to the practical position.

He added that "Saddam's regime's desecration of the city of al-Ramadi last year, Husayn Kamil's escape, which indicates the extent of the rift among the ruling family, the change of the Jordanian position toward the regime, and the holding of nominal elections, all these are indications of the regime's close end and that the opportunities for change this year are better than last year's."

Regarding the fate of the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees in Iraq, the SAIRI chairman said: the best way to know their fate is to resort to the same devices used by the United Nations to know the secrets of arms of destruction. Al-Hakim praised the position of the Kuwaiti Government and people in supporting and helping the Iraqi people, particularly those living abroad. [passage omitted]

Al-Hakim denied any smuggling of Iraqi oil through Iran, and stressed that such talk was a joke spread by media circles for known political aims. On the extent of cooperation between Iraqi opposition factions, he said that cooperation existed and was well coordinated, and underlined that opposition agreed on two things: the political language spoken to the Iraqi people, and an agreement on the conception of the future regime. He said: We are now working on a practical plan to confront the regime.

Concerning the relationship between SAIRI and the United States, al-Hakim said: there are no direct relations, but there is an exchange of views through the unified national Iraqi congress. He pointed out that the United States was seeking to topple Saddam by its own way which has failed to bring about a change so far.

The SAIRI chairman said in a press statement he delivered during the news conference that he met his highness the Amir of the country, the heir apparent and Prime Minister Shaykh Sa'd al-'Abdallah al-Salim al-Sabah, Ahmad al-Sa'dun, speaker of the National Assembly, and Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad, the first deputy prime minister and foreign affairs minister.

He pointed out that the two sides discussed the future of the region, and the security threat which the Iraqi regime posed to neighboring countries. The issue of the Iraqi regime's refusal to reveal the fate of the Kuwaiti prisoners and the missing in Iraq was also discussed, and the means sufficient [incomplete sentence as received].

The two sides also discussed the Iraqi regime's actions to mislead, deceive, and lie to the UN's committees in connection with the efforts it was exerting to restructure its military forces.

Al-Hakim also discussed with Kuwaiti leaders the means to strengthen the relations between the Kuwaiti and Iraqi peoples and the regional countries, particularly those surrounding Iraq, and the required cooperation and coordination to help the Iraqi people get rid of the bloody regime in Iraq.

Al-Hakim stressed in his statement that "the two sides have discussed the importance of revealing the role of the regime in the Iraqi people's suffering, the economic and military blockade it is imposing on them internally, and causing the continuation of the external blockade for not carrying out or implementing the UN resolutions, including resolution No. 986, and the need to relieve the Iraqi people by supervising the implementation of the resolution to ensure that food and medicine reach all the children directly."

He added that "the two sides have reviewed the efforts carried out by SAIRI to strengthen the unity of Iraq, particularly the unity of the Iraqi people and the Iraqi opposition, the crystallization of the field project, considering field work inside Iraq as the real work which could achieve the goal of toppling down the dictatorship, secures Iraq and preserves its sovereignty."

Al-Hakim's statement ended by saying that he and the accompanying delegation offered the supreme council's thanks to Kuwait for the humanitarian aid it offered to al-Hakim in the past.

Kuwait: More on 18 Feb News Conference by SAIRI Leader

LD1802125996 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1000 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has stressed the need to continue putting pressure on the Iraqi regime to release the Kuwaiti prisoners and detainees held in its jails.

Al-Hakim, who is currently visiting Kuwait, said in a news conference this morning that the best way to solve the prisoners' issue would be for the United Nations to adopt the same method it is pursuing to reveal the Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

He reemphasized that the ruler of Baghdad bears the full responsibility for the suffering of the Iraqi people by refusing to implement the international resolutions, particularly Resolution 986.

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Al-Hakim said that efforts should be made to achieve the goal of this resolution, which is represented by preventing the Iraqi regime from obtaining money or using it to strengthen its military bodies. He stressed the importance of ensuring that food and medicine reach all the sons of the Iraqi people directly.

He added that field work inside [Iraq] is the true work that could achieve the goal of toppling the dictator of Iraq, ensuring the unity of Iraq, and maintaining its sovereignty.

Qatar

Qatar: Interior Minister Announces 'Sabotage Attempt' Foiled

JN2002074596 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 0728 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Unscheduled announcement]

[FBIS Translated Text] The following is an announcement by the Interior Ministry:

The security authorities with God's help and support have foiled an attempt to undermine security and stability in the State of Qatar. The ringleaders of the attempt and a number of their assistants were arrested. Authorities have determined that the sabotage group had support and backing from abroad.

Security authorities are continuing to investigate this hostile action. May God preserve the State of Qatar, its beloved Amir, and its faithful people from all harm.

Qatar: 5 Arrested, 2 Escape in Failed Coup Attempt

NC2002121296 Paris AFP in English 1153 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Feb 20 (AFP) — Qatari army and police officers tried to overthrow the amir, Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, in a failed coup attempt on Saturday, political sources said Tuesday [20 February].

The coup attempt was led by seven army and police officers backed by 40 men, but all but two of them were arrested after they started carrying out their plot, according to the sources who asked not to be named.

The two who escaped fled to neighboring Bahrain, they added.

Qatar's interior ministry announced earlier Tuesday [20 February] it had arrested "a group of saboteurs" supported from abroad, but gave no details about the circumstances of the arrests.

Qatar: Ousted Amir Comments on Plan To Replace Son

NC2002094696 Paris AFP in English 0859 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Abu Dhabi, Feb 20 (AFP) — Qatar's former ruler vowed to return to Doha from exile in Abu Dhabi and retake power from the son who ousted him in a coup last June, according to a statement released Tuesday [20 February] by his staff.

"My return to Qatar is imminent," Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani said in the statement sent to AFP by one of his information officers, 'Isa al-Kawari, here in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). "I insist on correcting the situation in Qatar so the Gulf group will be in unison," Shaykh Khalifah said.

The release of his statement coincided with an announcement in Doha that the authorities had arrested "a group of saboteurs" trying to destabilize the country.

Shaykh Khalifah also slammed his son Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, who took power in a bloodless palace coup, for walking out from a Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Muscat in December.

"What happened at the Muscat summit was an intentional storm from parties that do not realise the proportions of their behavior and the situation in the region," he said in talks Sunday [18 February] with German MPs in the UAE.

Shaykh Khalifah refused to reveal how he would eject his son, but he was quoted as saying: "It is not wise to discuss this matter. There are several ways and the available options are many.

"I am capable of doing so and I reject interference by anyone in our internal affairs."

Shaykh Khalifah was toppled on June 27 during a visit to Europe. He toured Gulf and other Arab states to rally support for his return before deciding to stay in the UAE.

Qatar: UN Security Council Informed of Foiled 'Sabotage Attempt'

NC2002083296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0815 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Doha, 20 Feb (MENA)—The Qatari Interior Ministry announced today that it had foiled a sabotage attempt [muhawalah takhribiyah] to undermine the country's security and stability.

The QATARI NEWS AGENCY transmitted a statement by the Qatari Interior Ministry saying that the ringlead-

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ers in this attempt and several of their aides were arrested and that interrogators had discovered that the saboteur group had received support and succor from abroad.

The Qatari Interior Ministry statement says that the security authorities are continuing their investigations to uncover new information.

Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani has informed the ambassadors of the countries that are permanent members of the UN Security Council of the vile conspiracy that was directed against Qatar's security and stability.

Qatar: Cabinet Holds Emergency Session, Denounces 'Conspiracy'

JN2002091996 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 0905 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Council of Ministers held an emergency session this morning under His Highness Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, deputy prime minister and interior minister. His highness briefed the council on the hostile and abortive attempt to undermine security and stability in the country. He also informed the council of the results of the preliminary interrogations with the accomplices in this attempt.

The council denounced the conspiracy and supported measurers to preserve security and stability in the country. The council urged the Interior Ministry to complete the necessary measures in this regard. May God preserve Qatar and its beloved Amir from all harm.

Qatar: Consultative Council Renews 'Allegiance' to Amir Hamad

JN2002112696 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1047 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Consultative [Shura] Council held an emergency meeting at its headquarters in the al-Abyad Palace under its chairman Muhammad Bin-Mubarak al-Khukayfi.

At the beginning of the meeting, the chairman briefed the members of the council on the vile attempt which occurred inside the country over the past few days to undermine security and stability with the support of foreign quarters. At the conclusion of the meeting, the council issued the following statement:

The Consultative Council learned of the vile attempt by misguided elements to undermine security and stability in our beloved country and to tamper with the stability and prosperity enjoyed by our people under the leader of its march and its renaissance his highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani. These misguided elements had the support and backing of foreign quarters who believe they can undermine stability [al-nizam] in our young country.

While unanimously denouncing this vile attempt by those who have betrayed the country and the people with the aim of impeding the country's progress and striking at the march of development—God be praised, the plot was uncovered and the sedition was aborted—the Consultative Council expresses its full support and backing for their leader, His Highness Shaykh Hamad Bin-Khalifah Al Thani, who is very eager to realize security, progress, and prosperity for his people and who provides them with means of dignity and advancement.

On behalf of the people of this country, the Consultative Council renews its allegiance to his highness the beloved amir and supports him in all of his successful steps in the service of this beloved homeland and its sincere children. The council pledges to him, before God, that they will be sincere and faithful to his wise leadership.

Qatar: Jordan's King Husayn Reaffirms Support for Amir

JN2002132596 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1300 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His highness the beloved amir received a phone call from his brother the king of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during which the Jordanian king reaffirmed his country's — people and leadership — support for Qatar. He also denounced the criminal attempt that aimed at encroaching on the security and stability of Qatar and its fraternal people.

His highness also received another telephone call from the Kuwaiti parliament's speaker. They discussed the situation in Qatar.

Qatar: Foreign Minister Briefs Envoys on 'Vile Conspiracy'

JN2002092296 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 0907 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Bin-Jabr Al Thani, foreign minister, today met with their excellencies the ambassadors of the permanent members of the UN Security Council. His excellency the minister briefed the ambassadors on the vile conspiracy that targeted security and stability in the State of Qatar.

May God preserve the State of Qatar, his highness the beloved amir, and the Qatari people from all plots.

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Qatar: 'State of Alert' Declared at Hamad Hospital During 'Id

JN2002123896 Doha Radio Qatar in Arabic 1200 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Emergency Department at the Public Hamad Hospital announced a maximum state of alert to receive emergency cases during the days of 'Id al-Fitr. They decided to cancel all doctors' leaves and to maintain a 24-hour operation during the three days of the 'Id.

It was also decided to keep the medical centers in the city of Khalifah, Rayyan, (?Dumaylah), and Umm Ghuwaylinah (words indistinct) open (words indistinct).

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: 'High-Level' Saudi Delegation Reportedly Visited Israel

JN1902170596 Amman AL-URDUN in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 1

["Exclusive" report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A high-level Saudi delegation paid a secret visit to Israel last week. The delegation met with a number of Israeli officials led by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq. The delegation included three persons close to Prince 'Abdallah, who currently runs the affairs of Saudi Arabia.

AL-URDUN has learned from well-informed Arab sources that the Saudi delegation discussed with the Israeli officials the means of launching preliminary contact channels that will eventually lead to establishing bilateral relations and diplomatic representation.

On the plans the two sides discussed, the sources said that cooperation in security and economic affairs was highlighted. The Israeli side said it was ready to organize extensive and very advanced security courses for Saudi intelligence service personnel in Tel Aviv, Europe, and the United States. The courses will be supervised by senior Israeli intelligence officials.

According to the same sources, the Saudi delegation asked the Israeli side to supply Saudi Arabia with high-tech radio-sensitive Israeli radar systems. Discussions also dealt with cooperation in the field of the Russian-made satellites, which Israel possesses. The Israelis showed reservation with regard to satellites. However, they showed full readiness to cooperate in the field of radars, particularly those developed by Israel.

The Saudis suggested that cooperation and coordination with the Israelis be conducted through the Palestinian side, represented by President 'Arafat, who had earlier discussed this issue with Saudi officials. 'Arafat had also expressed his desire and readiness to open the road between Saudi Arabia and Israel in accordance with the Saudi perspective of this issue.

Saudi Arabia: Iranian Involvement in Bahrain Sabotage Criticized

JN1702131096 Al-Dammam AL-YAWM in Arabic 10 Feb 96 p 7

[Editorial: "The Best Method of Defense"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tehran was exposed and cornered after its involvement was proved through the confessions of detainees who perpetrated acts of sabotage in Bahrain. Tehran trained the detainees in the Iranian city of Qom.

This behavior is not a departure from Tehran's well-known hostile nature of exporting terrorism and violence to many countries, not just to Bahrain. Because of all this and because of its desire to sow sectarian sedition in Bahrain, claiming that this sedition is the outcome of the marginal and transient border dispute between Bahrain and Qatar, Tehran began to intensify its aggressive campaign against Bahrain. It did so through its recent inflammatory statement distributed by the Iranian Embassy in Kuwait in the belief that attack is the best defense. This method has been exposed, because every observer of events in the region is aware that this vindictive statement is a pack of lies, fabrications, and contradictions that Tehran resorts to whenever it wants to run away from new facts that expose its ill intentions against all the Gulf states.

In an attempt to fish in muddy waters, Tehran tried to attribute the new aggressive move to the border dispute between Bahrain and Qatar. However, its choice of Kuwait as the place to release this foolish storm leaves no doubt that the champions of exporting the revolution, which is based on violence and terrorism, in Tehran were trying to create hatred between Kuwait and Bahrain to harm their good brotherly relations. There is another dimension to this harm that is perhaps no secret to anyone who follows the repercussions of Iranian policy and its suspect stands toward the region. It exposes Tehran's rancorous policy toward the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] states. This policy is dominated by hatred and a mad desire to sow more sedition and disturbances within the united Gulf ranks to fulfill the dreams of the leaders in Tehran and shake up security and stability in the countries of the region and heat up the situation there. This is most obvious in Tehran's diplomatic maneuvers regarding the resolution of a crisis over three United Arab Emirates islands in order to turn the Gulf region into a new hotbed of

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tension, adding to the hotbeds that exist in various parts of the world, and to undermine the region's security, stability, and calmness.

It is clear that these suspect intentions contained in the latest Iranian statement should prompt the countries in the region to intensify their efforts to support channels of coordination and cooperation within their cooperative organization. They should do this to collectively, and not singularly, confront the continuous provocations that clearly expose the dimensions of Tehran's premeditated, aggressive intentions to undermine the security and stability of Bahrain and the rest of the countries in the region.

Tehran's politicians are worried about their involvement in the recent acts of sabotage in Bahrain. They were prompted to try a new and provocative attack in a desperate and obvious attempt to absorb the world's indignation, denunciation, and condemnation of their foolish behavior. This behavior proves once again that the policy of exporting the Iranian revolution is void of its propagandist contents and that it has failed against the strong walls of the GCC, which will only become firmer and more entrenched by these foolish acrobatics.

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd Reassures Populace of His Good Health

NC1702194996 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In an exclusive statement to MBC, custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, has asserted that the indisposition he suffered was a normal one and that he now enjoys good health.

King Fahd made these remarks when he received in his office at the al-Safa' Palace yesterday evening Hasan and Husayn 'Abd-al-Rahman, two Siamese twins who were surgically separated in London in 1987 at the expense of the custodian of the two holy mosques.

Hasan Zaytuni reports from Mecca:

[Begin recording] [Zaytuni] In the first interview since his ailment, custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, affirmed in an exclusive statement to MBC that the ailment was a passing one. He reassured all Muslims that today he enjoys good health.

[King Fahd] I would like to say a word through MBC. First, I thank MBC for the Islamic duties it has carried out and is still carrying out. The ailment I suffered was a normal one. I thank my brothers, leaders of the Arab and Islamic nation who inquired about me and gave me attention. I thank them very much. I also thank all the citizens of Saudi Arabia, from east to west and from north to south, and (?all Arabs) who inquired about me. Thank God, here I am enjoying good health.

[Zaytuni] The custodian of the two holy mosques made these remarks when he fulfilled the wish of the Sudanese twins, Hasan and Husayn, at the Royal Court in Mecca, where he received them in a fatherly manner. The twins were surgically separated at a hospital in London nine years ago. Since then, the custodian of the two holy mosques has acted as their sponsor. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Yemen

Yemen: Sanaa Reportedly Drops Call for Eritrean Withdrawal From Island

JN1802134396 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of French mediator Francis Gutmann's visit to Sanaa to meet with several Yemeni officials, a Yemeni official who declined to be named said that Yemen has dropped its call for an Eritrean withdrawal from the Red Sea's al-Hanish Island as a precondition for any negotiations between the two countries to facilitate French mediation in the dispute between Asmara and Sanaa.

The Yemeni capital handed the French mediator a draft agreement to be delivered to Asmara that contained, as the Yemeni official said, concessions by his country to render the French mediation a success, to contain the crisis, and to prevent escalation in the Red Sea.

The Yemeni official said his country agrees to maintain the status quo in the strategic al-Hanish Archipelago. In the past, Sanaa called for the Eritrean forces withdrawal from the positions they occupied on al-Hanish al-Kabir Island.

The Yemeni official also revealed some of the provisions of the draft agreement, including Sanaa's acceptance of arbitration. Yemen had rejected this Eritrean demand. Sanaa also agreed that both parties would not resort to force during the six-month arbitration period.

Gutmann returned to Paris yesterday. Before he left Sanaa, Gutmann said he hopes the French mediation will succeed, but he did not discuss the results of his shuttle tour of Sanaa and Asmara.

Yemen: Foreign Ministry Source Reacts to Eritrean Statement

NC1902072196 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2225 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Sanaa, 18 Feb (MENA)—A Yemeni Foreign Ministry source stated tonight that

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Yemen already announced its acceptance of the French initiative to go to arbitration to find a peaceful solution to the crisis over the Yemeni al-Hanish Island, which Eritrea has been occupying since 15 December.

In an exclusive statement to MENA, the source described the recent statement issued by the Eritrean Government as an exposed attempt to cover up Eritrean aggression, an attempt that implies a desire to escalate the dispute and circumvent the solution.

The Yemeni source reiterated his country's full insistence on its rights of sovereignty over the entire al-Hanish Archipelago. The source emphasized that Yemen will continue to shoulder its full responsibilities to the world to find a peaceful solution to the problem created by Eritrea.

The al-Hanish Archipelago is made up of five islands. They are Fatimah and Dahlak, which are under Eritrean control, the 80-square-km al-Hanish al-Kabir, 60-square-km al-Hanish al-Saghir, and Zuqar, at 122 square km. The last three are the subject of the recent political and military conflict between the two countries.

Yemen: Eritrea Accused of Trying To Scuttle French Mediation

NC1602211996 Paris AFP in English 2056 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sanaa, Feb 16 (AFP) — Yemen on Friday [16 February] accused Eritrea of trying to torpedo French efforts to broker a solution to their conflict over a strategic chain of Red Sea islands.

An official Yemeni spokesman said that a statement earlier by an Eritrean commission saying the two countries had not agreed on a definition of their dispute was "an attempt to camouflage aggression."

He added that it reflected Asmara's desire to "encourage an escalation and divert the mediation efforts deployed by friendly countries, mainly France."

In a statement made available to AFP in Nairobi earlier, the National Commission for Zuqar-al-Hanish Archipelago Dispute and Maritime Boundary Delineation said Yemen was illegally occupying the island of Zuqar but that Sanaa wanted to limit discussions to claims over the island of al-Hanish al-Kabir (Greater Hanish).

It came after a visit to Asmara on Wednesday and Thursday by French mediators Francis Gutmann and Jean-Marie Momal, who met with President Isaias Afwerki.

"As yet no agreement has been reached between Eritrea and Yemen on the definition of the dispute itself," the statement said and slammed Sanaa's attitude as being "incomprehensible and unacceptable."

Gutmann however said after arriving in Sanaa Thursday: "Some progress has been made not only in the French mediation but in the efforts by other countries in the region," according to the official Yemeni agency SABA'.

He held talks on Thursday with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih on the definition of the conflict, a precondition by Yemen before opening talks with Eritrea.

Yemen has also accused Eritrea of boosting its military presence on Greater Hanish, captured by Eritrean forces after a three-day battle in December in which nine people died.

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Iraq: Baghdad TV Reports 'Satisfaction' With Food-for-Oil Talks

JN1602195696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi and UN General Secretariat delegations resumed their dialogue at noon today on implementing the resolution on oil for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The two delegations, which are headed by Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari and legal adviser Hans Corell, are holding a new round of talks to continue discussing technical issues on the agenda.

Yesterday the two delegations discussed banking issues and financial measures related to selling oil in return for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

UN sources said the talks between the two delegations today focused on financial measures and oil issues related to production and marketing. They said the two delegations will hold a general meeting later.

An INA correspondent in New York said the Iraqi and UN delegations have moved from discussing the distribution of food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people to the subject of the Iraqi oil sales and financial issues related to it.

INA learned that the discussions are about an Iraqi plan, and that when an agreement is reached by the two delegations, this plan will be presented to the UN secretary general. Sources close to the Security Council told the INA correspondent that the Iraqi delegation has the necessary power to discuss all elements of the plan, and that there is a feeling of satisfaction by several Security Council parties due to the positive developments in the current dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Reports Progress in Talks With UN

JN1702123896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] At 1700 yesterday, New York time, 0100 Baghdad time [2200 GMT], the Iraqi and UN delegations a held new session in the series of talks on implementing the formula of selling oil in return of food, medicine, and basic needs in Iraq.

The two delegations met session yesterday morning. The United Nations said the session dealt with financial arrangements and oil affairs related to production and marketing.

Meanwhile, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari said that in its talks with the UN Secretariat General's delegation, the Iraqi delegation is trying to open all the closed doors. At the end of yesterday evening's dialogue session, Dr. al-Anbari told reporters that the two delegations are exchanging unofficial drafts and success is achieved each time they meet. He stressed that the two delegations are continuing their talks. We have definitely achieved progress on this issue.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Says UN Talks To Result in Memo of Understanding

JN1802122696 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi and UN delegations will continue their talks today after two rounds of discussions on 17 February.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks, told reporters after yesterday's two sessions that the two sides had discussed almost all the agenda items. He said that the delegations are exchanging unofficial working papers.

During yesterday's two sessions, which lasted five hours, the discussions focused on the issues of oil marketing, the distribution of food and medicine, and financial affairs related to the formula of selling oil in return for food, medicine, and other basic needs.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari stressed that the current talks will result in the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations on that formula.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Says 'Technical' Talks With UN To Resume

JN1802202396 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the talks with the United Nations, has said that he expects that the two delegations to the dialogue will resume their technical sessions tomorrow, Monday.

In a statement to reporters on arrival at the UN building today, Sunday, he said that the two delegations will review all the agenda items during tomorrow's session.

Dr. al-Anbari pointed out that the session will also discuss issues related to the next step following the current talks. He said that the two delegations have continued their discussion of all the agenda items.

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The two delegations began a new session today, Sunday. [passage omitted]

Iraq: Al-Anbari Views Upcoming 'Final Session' of Dialogue

JN1802221796 Baghdad INA in Arabic 2155 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] United Nations, 18 Feb (INA)—The Iraqi and UN delegations this afternoon completed discussion of all agenda issues within their dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and basic needs for the Iraqi people.

In a statement to an INA correspondent in New York, Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari said that the final session tomorrow will focus on what has been accomplished so far.

He added in other statements to journalists that both delegations will hold a final session tomorrow morning, New York time. He expressed hope that tomorrow's meeting will be the final one in this round of dialogue.

The two delegations today held a meeting which lasted for more than four continuous hours — the longest meeting since the beginning of the technical dialogue on 6 February.

The Iraqi chief delegate noted that the date of the next session has not been discussed. He said, however, that tomorrow, Monday, will be the date for concluding the current round of dialogue.

Iraq: Oil-for-Food Talks With UN Team Continue

JN1902190796 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 19 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi and UN delegations have held a general official dialogue session as part of a series of sessions dealing with the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

An INA correspondent in New York said that the session tackled the topics discussed by the two delegations during their dialogue that began at the UN headquarters on 6 February. The dialogue focused on trade affairs, foodstuffs and their distribution through Trade Ministry agents, health affairs, medicine, oil production and marketing, and relevant financial affairs.

The two delegations also reviewed a draft of what they had agreed to call the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations.

The head of the Iraqi delegation voiced hope that another round of dialogue would be held. Information obtained by the INA correspondent indicates that Hans Corell, UN legal adviser and head of the UN team, will give a news conference later today.

The Iraqi and UN delegations yesterday afternoon, Sunday, discussed technical issues related to oil for food, medicine and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari told INA that today's session would review what has been accomplished so far. In another statement to reporters, he said that the two delegations would hold another session on Monday morning, New York time.

Yesterday, Sunday, the two delegations held a session of talks that lasted more than four hours.

Iraq: Oil-For-Food Talks Conclude; Delegation Heads Comment

JN1902220496 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 2110 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Iraqi and UN delegations have held a general official dialogue session as part of a series of sessions dealing with the technical dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations which tackled in detail the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine and basic needs of the Iraqi people.

An INA correspondent in New York said that at this session, the two sides reviewed the issues the two delegations had discussed during the dialogue sessions that began at the UN headquarters on 6 February. The session focused on trade affairs, foodstuffs and their distribution through Trade Ministry agents, health affairs, medicine, oil production and marketing, and relevant financial affairs.

The two delegations also reviewed a draft of what they had agreed to call the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the United Nations.

The head of the Iraqi delegation said he hopes that another round of dialogue will be held. Information obtained by the INA correspondent indicates that Hans Corell, UN legal adviser and head of the UN team, will give a news conference later today.

On the other hand, the INA correspondent in New York said that the dialogue session between the Iraqi delegation and the delegation of the UN general secretariat ended after a dialogue [words indistinct]. He said that both parties studied the topics that were discussed during the past period. He voiced gratitude for the cooperation of the UN delegation and the efforts [word indistinct] during the present session of talks.

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Ambassador al-Anbari added that the two sides held the sessions of talks over a period of more than two weeks. He said that the two sides studied all the topics in order to reach an agreement. He added that the two delegations had sought to reach a very clear understanding of all the topics to reach agreement.

In a meeting with reporters, Hans Corell said the talks were conducted upon an invitation from the UN secretary general. He said the talks were calm and natural just as any other talks of this kind.

Hans Corell, head of the UN delegation, added that the two delegations discussed very detailed issues. He said: We discussed oil production and marketing. We also discussed the issue of a bank account, buying and shipping food and drugs, and bank transfers related to marketing oil. We also discussed the distribution of goods. Corell emphasized that the talks were held in a technical and positive atmosphere. He noted that he will submit his report to the UN secretary general on the results of the talks.

Iraq: 'Aziz Says 1st Round of Oil-for-Food Talks 'Positive'

JN2002113996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1035 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 20 Feb (INA)—Deputy Prime Minister Tariq 'Aziz said that the talks held between Iraq and the United Nations were positive. Commenting on the results of the first round of talks on the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine, and basic needs for the Iraqi people, Tariq 'Aziz said in a statement to INA: The two delegations concluded their first technical round of talks, which lasted more than two weeks. He added that the talks dealt with many technical details which must be discussed to reach a satisfactory formula for both sides.

The deputy prime minister added that the two delegations will present what was accomplished and what was not accomplished to their administrations. The UN delegation will present its report to the secretary general and the Iraqi delegation will return to Baghdad after the blessed 'Id al-Fitr holidays [20-23 February] to present its report to the leadership.

Tariq 'Aziz said: After the Iraqi leadership and the secretary general separately study the results of the first round of the technical talks, Iraq and the secretary general will meet to set a date and method for resuming the talks. 'Aziz added: This might take place in March.

The deputy prime minister said the talks were technical and were held in a calm and business-like atmosphere. 'Aziz added that the two sides exchanged views on a broad and detailed level to reach a common understanding on all aspects. 'Aziz noted that this shows that the nature of the talks was positive.

The IRAQI NEWS AGENCY learned from the Iraqi delegation sources that the two delegations produced what is termed as a nonofficial paper that deals with all aspects of the 15-session round of talks. This paper will be presented to the Iraqi leadership and the UN secretary general, the sources said.

The nonofficial paper notes that the talks dealt with many technical issues which must be resolved with the aim of creating a basis for dealing with the issue on the political level in the subsequent stage.

INA also learned from the two delegations' sources that they worked hard to prepare this basis and that the discussion, which was held with open minds, was frank.

UN sources expect both sides to discuss the date for resuming the talks after the 'Id al-Fitr holidays.

Iraq: Government Reportedly To Release Shi'ite Uprising Leaders

JN1702084496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Salamah Ni'matt]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Iraq plans to release soon the jailed leaders of the Shi'ite uprising of 1991 in a measure aimed to undermine Iran's attempts to move the Shi'ite's spiritual base from al-Najaf in southern Iraq to Qom in Iran, relatives of these leaders said Friday [16 February].

The relatives, who arrived in Amman recently, said that the prisoners have been informed of "the decision by the Iraqi authorities to release them soon, on the fifth anniversary of the Shi'ite uprising."

According to them, there are six out of an original 10 jailed Shi'ite leaders who are still in jail. Four were released earlier.

The remaining six, who represent the highest "reference" for the al-Najaf-based Shi'ite leadership, are Ayatollah 'Izz-al-Din Bahr al-'Ulum, Ayatollah 'Ala' Bahr al-'Ulum, Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan Musa Bahr al-'Ulum, Ayatollah Muhammad Riza Khalkhali, al-Sayid Ibrahim, who is the eldest son of the Imam Abu-al-Qasim al-Khu'i, and the Lebanese Islamic thinker 'Ali al-Ja'far.

Informed sources said that the absence of these leading Shi'ite thinkers has weakened the seat of the Shi'ites in al-Najaf and provided Iran with a pretext to move the seat to Qom. They added that the Iraqi move to

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release these leaders was designed as "a gesture of goodwill" towards "compliance with the principles of human rights."

They pointed out that the Iraqi authorities were also planning to release tens of thousands of Iraqis who participated in the uprising in the Shi'ite governorates following the Gulf war, as a step before allowing human rights groups to inspect Iraqi prisons.

The release of the Shi'ite leaders is expected to annoy the Iranians, the sources stressed.

Iraq: Husayn Kamil Confirms Contacts With Baghdad on Return

JN1902174996 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1610 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In statements to AFP General Husayn Kamil Hasan, the Iraqi president's son-in-law, has revealed he is thinking of returning to Baghdad from where he fled to Jordan last August.

In a telephone contact with him, Husayn Kamil Hasan denied all the statements that were attributed to him before this day and replied to our questions, once again affirming his desire to return to Baghdad.

[Begin recording] [Kamil] The desire is there. Complete coordination took place over a request I submitted to Baghdad to return. I found a positive response. I submitted a written letter asking to return. We are awaiting the final reply.

[Unidentified correspondent] Have you contacted President Saddam Husayn in person?

[Kamil] There was a mediator who used to contact my brothers who are close to the president. This mediator would communicate to them what I wanted and bring me a reply. I then submitted a detailed letter in this respect.

[Correspondent] After what has taken place, and the stands you announced after you left for Amman, is return possible under these circumstances?

[Kamil] Return should be possible. The reason is that I find Arab and non-Arab countries announcing that they will work against Iraq, that they will work to partition Iraq under the pretext of toppling the regime. This compels me to act, not to remain idle, and not to remain away from my country. All this cancels all that I have previously said. I am really preparing to return to my country, and to be in my country to defend it. At the same time, no Iraqi or any other should understand that perhaps I might be part of this scenario.

[Correspondent] Could we say that the return could take place soon?

[Kamil] Yes, this is possible if there is a final approval.

[Correspondent] Did King Husayn play a role in your recent contacts with Baghdad?

[Kamil] His majesty the king knew. But, the reply of the man was that Jordan is your country. I thank his majesty for this stand. His majesty told me in person that it was up to me. I thanked him very much. I know that his majesty had not set any limitations. On the contrary, the hospitality was generous [end recording]

Iraq: SAIRI Chairman Cited on 'Real' Opportunity To Topple Saddam

JN1702200696 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Eminence Ayatollah Muhammad Baqir al-Hakim, chairman of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq [SAIRI], has stated that the opportunity for effecting change in Iraq is real and a fact now. In a recent statement to the Kuwaiti newspaper AL-QABAS, al-Hakim said that the Iraqi opposition is continuing its endeavors to overcome obstacles and problems to speed up the realization of its cherished aim of wiping out the unjust regime in Baghdad and toppling the tyrant Saddam. He asserted that matters are taking a course which is in the interest of the Iraqi people's opposition.

On Resolution 986, al-Hakim said that the United Nations can implement this resolution fully and realize its aims by making a distinction between our deprived innocent people and the unjust Baghdad regime which is still fomenting seditions and disturbances in the region.

Iraq: Former Army Official Says Iraq Still Has Biological Weapons

NC1702160696 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1530 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Wafiq al-Samarra'i, former director of the Iraqi Army Intelligence Directorate, has asserted that the Iraqi regime still has biological weapons. In its edition today, the weekly AL-ITTIHAD cited al-Samarra'i as saying that the Iraqi regime was scheduled to carry out its first nuclear test five years ago. He emphasized that the Baghdad regime still has biological weapons.

Iraq: Memo to Arab League Protests Allied Aircraft Flights

NC1802145596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1350 GMT 18 Feb 95

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 18 Feb (MENA)—The Arab League Secretariat General today received a mem-

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orandum from the Iraqi Government on recent violations of Iraqi territory by U.S, French, and British military aircraft.

Dr. Nabil Najm, Iraq's permanent delegate to the Arab League, said the Iraqi memorandum contains a list of these violations during the period from 16-31 January. He added that these aircraft carried out 912 sorties during that period.

The Iraqi delegate clarified that the three countries' fighter-bomber aircraft flew at an altitude ranging from 6-9 km at speeds between 600 and 900 km/hour. He added that TDI [expansion unknown] reconnaissance aircraft also conducted flights over Iraq. This, he noted, represents a violation of Iraq's sovereignty over its territory.

Dr. Najm demanded that the memorandum be distributed to Arab League member states and that it be regarded as an official document in view of the dangers posed by these violations of pan-Arab security.

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Israel: IDF Declares Jericho Closed Military Zone

TA1802184596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Israeli civilian was slightly wounded by stones thrown at his car in the Ramallah area today.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] declared Jericho a closed military zone. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that tomorrow morning Israelis will not be able to enter the city due to security considerations.

[Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1800 GMT on 18 February reports that "the closure on the territories will continue. A senior security element says there are still warnings about intended terrorist attacks by Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and the Islamic Jihad"]

Israel: Peres Says Closure To Continue, Comments on Orient House

TA2002133496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said today that the closure imposed on the territories will continue because there is information that four groups are preparing a terror attack: two in Judaea and Samaria and two in the Gaza Strip.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that Peres, speaking before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said that there is no doubt that there are Israelis who want to murder ministers. According to him, there are thousands who are planning or are willing to assassinate ministers. It is hard to say when a line has been crossed, when someone is called a traitor, or when they say that Peres will partition Jerusalem. I even heard that it has been said that Peres wants to burn down Jerusalem, the prime minister said.

He stressed that Jibril al-Rujub and his men will have no business in Jerusalem and that he has instructed Minister Shahal to take the necessary steps. He added that Israel will allow no Palestinian Authority [PA] activity in Orient House. According to him, three PLO offices have already been removed from East Jerusalem: the Central Bureau of Statistics, the Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation, and the Health Council.

Meretz Knesset Member Ran Kohen asked the prime minister why Israel should not agree to view Orient House as an official representation of the PA in Israel. Peres said in reply that he does not like the idea.

Israel: Anonymous Callers Threaten Peres' Life

TA1802063996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0600 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Anonymous callers telephoned the home of Dr. Tzviya Walden, the daughter of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, and threatened the prime minister's life. Among other things, the callers said: [Pop singer] Aviv Gefen sang in Rabin's memory; Ethnics [pop group] will sing for Peres.

Our correspondent Yafa Glick reports that a week ago, plants were uprooted in the garden near Dr. Walden's office at the Ramat Hasharon Art College. The security forces are now investigating whether this is related to the threats she received.

Israel: Peres Issues 'Special Announcement' Denying Jerusalem Talks

TA1802105096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The cabinet secretary has issued a special announcement on behalf of Prime Minister Shim'on Peres stating that there are no grounds for the accusations leveled against the prime minister and the cabinet with regard to their alleged intention to partition Jerusalem. The cabinet secretary said that the claims that secret talks are being held on this matter are groundless. The prime minister has categorically stated that he knows of no official element either dealing with or negotiating on the Jerusalem issue. Prime Minister Peres stresses that the entire cabinet is united behind the principle of a united Jerusalem and that the allegations leveled against the government on this matter are tantamount to incitement.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz notes that during the cabinet session there was a debate over whether the ministers should address the Jerusalem issue in light of the Likud's election propaganda or whether it would be preferable not to play into the hands of the opposition. The prime minister decided to instruct the cabinet secretary to publish the above communique.

In the cabinet meeting, Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal briefed the participants on warnings received about plans to harm the prime minister and several other cabinet members, including Shahal himself and Minister Yosi Sarid. Some of the ministers sharply attacked the recent manifestations of incitement among right-wing circles. Minister Mikha Harish said we are again witnessing the kind of incitement seen at the Zion Square rally [in which Rabin was portrayed in an SS uniform]. Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer, who had warned about the threat to government officials' safety

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prior to Rabin's assassination, repeated his warning. Minister Hayim Ramon said that if right-wing activist Avigdor Eskine's contention that Yig'al 'Amir was not a murderer does not constitute incitement, then he does not know what does. Minister Shim'on Shetrit expressed doubts about whether right-wing circles felt real remorse over Rabin's murder.

The ministers criticized the police commissioner for requesting additional budgets to pay for the security details around their homes. The ministers said they had not asked for such protection and even complained that it is an encumbrance.

Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports that the prime minister added that he did not support Labor Secretary Nisim Zvili's initiative to formulate a manifesto keeping the Jerusalem issue out of the election debate. Peres asked the cabinet ministers to refrain from discussing this issue.

Israel: Bar'am, Netanyahu Comment on Jerusalem Issue

TA1802174596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister 'Uzi Bar'am says there will be no boroughs plan in Jerusalem, adding that no direct or indirect negotiations are being held with any element regarding dividing the city. Minister Bar'am told Qol Yisra'el that the Christians and Muslims should be given autonomy in the holy sites, but that no sovereignty should be permitted in Jerusalem to any element other than Israel.

Likud Knesset Member Yehoshu'a Matza told Qol Yisra'el that the government is misleading the public while currently negotiating a solution to the Jerusalem problem.

Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu says that in the upcoming elections the public will face a simple choice between allowing a Palestinian state and conceding half of Jerusalem under a Peres government, as opposed to self-rule in the territories while preserving a united Jerusalem under the Likud's rule. Netanyahu told a right-wing gathering that Peres is lying with regard to the Jerusalem issue and that Labor is the party that put the Jerusalem issue on the agenda. According to Netanyahu, Jerusalem's political and physical partition has already begun. This is reported by our correspondent Yuval Yo'az.

Israel: Palestinians Involved in Jerusalem Talks Listed

TA1802192796 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Studio talk between Anchor Hayim Yavin and party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yavin] This evening Yaron Deqel uncovers the names of the Palestinians who have met with Dr. Ron Pundaq, who according to Jerusalem Mayor Olmert, discussed Jerusalem's future within the framework of the permanent arrangement. Good evening, Yaron.

[Deqel] Good evening to you.

[Yavin] Well, as the saying goes, there is no smoke without fire, is there?

[Deqel] This is at least what Jerusalem Mayor Olmert is saying. At stake are two meetings that were brought to Ehud Olmert's attention. Olmert claims that one meeting was held in Jerusalem's Orient House last November and that the other meeting was held at the PASSIA [Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs] building in East Jerusalem. The two meetings were attended by Dr. Ron Pundaq and Dr. Ya'ir Hirshfeld, the two Israelis. The PASSIA meeting, held in late December, was attended on the Palestinian side — according to Olmert — by several prominent officials, including Ziyad Abu-Zayyad; Riyad al-Maliki; Zahirah Kamal, who failed in the Palestinian council elections in Jerusalem; Samih al-'Abid; Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] member Jamil al-Hamami; and PASSIA head Dr. Mahdi 'Abd-al-Hadi.

According to the Palestinians' reports, Pundaq and Hirshfeld made it clear that they received Yosi Beilin's okay to conduct talks on Jerusalem's future. It should be noted that the meeting was held in late December, after Prime Minister Rabin's assassination. According to the reports on the meeting, the two also made it clear that Labor agrees to work out an administrative division of powers in such fields as transportation and tourism, powers that were transferred to the Palestinians in the territories — this, according to the reports relayed by the Palestinians to Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert. We should recall, at the same time, that Olmert is a Likud member.

Israel: Beilin Favors 2 'Independent Administrations' in Jerusalem

TA1902074296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Yosi Beilin, says he supports granting

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Jerusalem Palestinians independence on administrative matters. Talking in a television interview last night, Minister Beilin said Jerusalem would remain Israel's united capital. Contacts resume today on setting a date for the early general elections. David Ze'ev reports:

[Begin recording] Minister Yosi Beilin says he supports granting Jerusalem Palestinians administrative responsibility over their lives. The solution would be to set up independent administrations in the city. Minister Beilin says it would be a solution which would best serve both Palestinians and Israelis. The plan which he supports, Beilin says, is one which was put forward in the past by former Mayor Teddy Kollek. Each community, the minister said, would be responsible for its own needs. Within this framework, full Israeli sovereignty would be preserved over Jerusalem which would therefore remain Israel's undivided capital. The plan would also suit another aspect of policy supported by Prime Minister Shim'on Peres, that Muslims control their holy sites in the city.

Beilin spoke on Channel 2 Television last night. At around the same time, on Channel 1, coalition chairman Ra'anan Kohen was saying that Labor will support May 14th as election day. This, as all the talk about Jerusalem, has drawn attention to another date on the calendar: Jerusalem Day, the Jewish calendar anniversary of the Israeli capture of the Western Wall and other parts of East Jerusalem. It falls on May 17th. The coalition chairman denied that Labor is now trying to arrange the ballot on the 14th to avoid Jerusalem Day. Likud and Tzomet charge Labor is trying to prevent the opposition from having another chance to play on the emotions of the public and right before the people go the polls. The senior Labor Party team which has been dealing with the election date, among other issues, is scheduled to meet with Prime Minister Peres this morning, and then with religious factions in the Knesset and the Likud. [end recording]

Israel: Peres on Jerusalem, Ties With NRP, U.S.

TA1602184196 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 3 Network in Hebrew 1600 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Professor Shlomo Ben-'Ami, Attorney Amnon Zikhroni, Dr. Yosi Olmert, and journalist Daniyel Ben-Simon at the Prime Minister's Office; date not given; from the "Weekly Column" program — recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] [Olmert] I heard a very respectable female Knesset member from your party say in a very public forum in Rehovot that she will push for municipal autonomy in Jerusalem in the near future. What is your view on this?

[Peres] My view is negative.

[Olmert] Negative?

[Peres] Yes.

[Olmert] Do Palestinian Authority elections in Jerusalem jeopardize the integrity of Jerusalem?

[Peres] No. Jews make up three-quarters of Jerusalem's population, and I see no reason.... [pauses] You see, there is an attempt to create hysteria around the issue of Israel's capital. Some people constantly say that Jerusalem is about to be snatched away from us, that it is about to be divided. Well, no. I feel strong and confident on the issue of Jerusalem. Historically, it has never been an Arab capital, and historically, the Jewish people have never had any capital other than Jerusalem. We are the majority there, we head the municipality, and it is under Israel's sovereignty. Therefore, I refuse to be swept up by the hysteria.

[Zikhroni] What do you think of [former Jerusalem Mayor] Teddy Kollek's old idea for civilian administrations in Jerusalem?

[Peres] Look, if it is an administrative matter, it hardly interests me, because an administration can be run this way or that. I have seen different administrations in my lifetime, and administration is not a preordained arrangement. If it is an administration, it does not interest me; politically, however, the city will not be divided. [passage omitted]

[Ben-'Ami] Do you feel that, unlike in past elections, public support will lead you to victory this time?

[Peres] First of all, I do not think I have ever lost in elections. I never have. In 1981, after the 1977 failure for which I was in no way responsible, Mr. Begin received 48 Knesset seats, while I received 47. In a country of coalitions, calling this a failure is quite cheeky. I received a crumbling, totally decimated movement, and I brought it that far.

What happened was that we made one historic mistake, for which we have been paying to this very day and for which I have paid all this time: the so-called brilliant gambit of 1977. The moment we parted company with the National Religious Party [NRP], we lost the majority we had, and your humble servant here has been paying for it ever since.

What happened in the last elections, when Yitzhaq [Rabin] mustered a majority, was a matter of luck. In terms of numbers, the Likud had more votes than we did, as you know, but they were divided, and the threshold was changed from 1 to 1.5 percent, as a result of which Ge'ula Kohen did not make it into the Knesset.

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Had she gotten in, both Labor and Likud would have had 60 seats. Some people have been perpetuating the myth that I am a loser. I did not lose. I won 44 seats against Shamir's 41. Where is the loss? I was unable to form a coalition, however, because the NRP, meanwhile, had moved from the center to the extreme right. [passage omitted]

[Olmert] You said something about the need for Labor to return to some kind of association with the religious parties.

[Peres] Definitely. It was a historic alliance, as they say.

[Olmert] Some very key members of your party and, naturally, of Meretz are waging a constant war on religious issues. Where do you stand on this? Why do you permit them to run wild?

[Peres] First of all, no one is running wild. [passage omitted]

If I am elected prime minister, I believe I will be able to form a coalition this time. In this way, these elections differ from previous ones. I will certainly want to have religious elements in this coalition. I am not an antireligious man, although I am not exactly religious. I am against a national rift. There is a national flavor called Meretz. Well, we will deal with them, too.

[Ben-'Ami] I would like to move on to international affairs. You have a European orientation dating back to your past, and I think you have learned over the years to understand and appreciate the U.S. uniqueness and, of course, its objective power and role. Can you envision a different balance in our relationship with Europe and the United States in the peace era?

[Peres] Listen, I have discussed it with the Europeans and the Americans. I told them: You should not have an Atlantic alliance against war; you should make one for peace. You are making a mistake by addressing peace separately. Don't forget that the United States is Europe's legitimate offspring. It was born in Europe, but it tried to correct Europe's mistakes on a new continent. [passage omitted]

Israel can play a role — and it is — in forging an Atlantic alliance for peace in the Middle East.

[Ben-Simon] Will the United States be part of that arrangement?

[Peres] Yes, a major part. The United States has had to deal with opposition to foreign aid. What happened there was that when there was no war, Congress was willing to add $7 billion to the defense budget. Now, with peace under way, Congress is ready to cut $2 billion from the peace aid, the foreign aid. The aid issue has become a bone of contention between the parties and not really a fiscal issue. Therefore, having promoted and financed our peace with Egypt, Jordan, and partially with the Palestinians, the United States will be unable to finance the future peace. A partnership between wealthy Europe and the wealthy United States will be needed.

[Ben-Simon] Does your regional concept mean that you will not support an attempt to attain a defense pact with the United States, but you will seek a regional U.S. presence: some sort of regional defense arrangement rather than a bilateral defense alliance with the United States?

[Peres] I would opt for what is called in Europe Partners for Peace [preceding three words in English]. It refers to a loose defense organization, like a tent that is open to everyone, which can be used against aggressors, too. This is my line of thinking. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres — Raising Jerusalem Issue Harms 'Vital' Interests

TA2002114896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that there are in Israel dozens, hundreds, and perhaps even thousands of people who wish or plan to harm ministers, including himself. The prime minister added that raising the Jerusalem issue now harms Israel's vital interest in the world and among the Arabs. The prime minister spoke with journalists after leaving the Knesset committee. Yo'el Nir reports from the Knesset:

[Begin recording] [Nir] The prime minister told the committee that there are dozens, hundreds, and perhaps even thousands who want to or plan to harm ministers, including the prime minister. But when he left the meeting, the prime minister hesitated to discuss the matter publicly.

[Peres] I said that there are people who threaten to assassinate ministers, that is all.

[Nir] The prime minister was asked whether there are hundreds or thousands of these people and not just a nucleus of extremists.

[Peres] It is made up of hundreds and perhaps thousands.

[Nir] The prime minister then discussed the Jerusalem issue.

[Peres] You are making a game out of the Jerusalem issue, but I do not know anybody who wants to divide Jerusalem, and I do not understand the logic of the Likud in saying to the world and the Arabs: Wait, do not yield on Jerusalem, because half the nation wants to divide it.

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I do not understand the political logic, not to mention the falsehood of the matter. It says to the entire world: Do not give in to Israel on Jerusalem, because half the Israelis are willing to divide it up. I do not understand the logic of the matter. I do not understand how that is patriotic. It is aimed at winning a fraction of a point in a poll. Labor says quite clearly: We are in favor of a united Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. There will not be two governments or two administrations in Jerusalem. So what is all the talk about?

[Nir] Mr. Peres added that he ordered the public security minister to make sure that the Palestinian Police leave Jerusalem. We will not permit two police forces there, he said. On Orient House, he added that if it operates as a Jerusalem institution, there is no problem. But if it is annexed by or represents the Palestinian Authority, that is contrary to the agreement and Israel will not permit it. [end recording]

Israel: Likud Election Campaign To Make Jerusalem Central Issue

TA1702194696 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Announcer-read video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Binyamin Netanyahu has asked Reserves Major General Yitzhaq Mordekhay and Knesset Member [MK] Eliyahu Ben-Elisar to draft the political and security chapter of the Likud's platform. Our correspondent Dan Scemama reports that tomorrow the Likud will launch its election campaign that focuses on Jerusalem. The Likud's public relations campaign will attempt to convince the public that Peres is going to partition Jerusalem. On 22 February, the Likud Central Committee is expected to approve a date for the party's primaries: 18 March, one week earlier than scheduled.

In reaction, the Labor secretary general has appealed to all political parties to sign a manifesto proclaiming that Jerusalem should remain outside public argument, because no one is challenging its unity. This report was filed by our correspondent Qeren Neubach.

MK David Levi will register his new party with the parties registrar and announce its name at the beginning of this week. Last night, the Channel 1 At-Large Poll revealed the results of the survey in Lod, where over 700 adults were polled. The results were surprising: Likud-Tzomet received 34 percent, David Levi's party 32 percent, and Labor had 23 percent. The other parties received 2 percent or less in Lod. In the premiership elections, Binyamin Netanyahu mustered 36 percent, David Levi 35 percent, and Shim'on Peres received 28 percent in the Lod balloting station. We must note here that the Lod survey was not a representative sample of the population. [passage omitted]

Israel: Peres Wants Vote 14 or 21 May, Discusses 'Character Assassination'

TA1902095896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Shim'on Peres has instructed Labor's negotiating team to conclude with the opposition the earliest election date possible: 14 or 21 May. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that at a meeting with team members this morning, the prime minister said as follows: The Likud has begun a Peres character assassination; the Likud's campaign slogan regarding Jerusalem is only the beginning. Peres added that this is not the first time he has faced such a thing, but this time it will last three months. If necessary, we will need to change legislation too, Peres said. At the moment the Labor team is conferring with representatives of the Knesset religious parties.

Israel: Peres on Likud 'Tall Tales'; More on Campaign Team

TA1902135296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Speaking at a Labor faction meeting this afternoon, Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said that all the Likud claims regarding Jerusalem are tall tales. He said that Likud Chairman Binyamin Netanyahu told the Knesset two years ago that he had learned from an absolutely authoritative source that the Rabin government had made a proposal to Syria according to which Israel would withdraw completely from the Golan Heights in stages and U.S. troops would be placed on the Golan and Mount Hermon. This was as true then as it is today, Peres said mockingly.

He further said that the government will not devaluate the shekel and will make certain that the Israeli economy remains stable.

Peres instructed the Labor faction to recommend holding the elections on 20 May, provided the ultra-Orthodox parties accept that date. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that if they refuse, Labor will recommend holding the elections on 14 May. The issue will be brought for a vote at the Knesset Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee and, if approved, will be brought for a first reading by the Knesset plenum on 21 February. The second and third readings will be held on 26 February and the coalition has a guaranteed majority of 61-63 Knesset members.

Our correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that Mr. Peres announced in the meeting that Construction and

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Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer will head the party's elections headquarters and that Hayim Ramon will head the information headquarters. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq will head Peres' personal headquarters and will be in charge of polls. Moshe Shahal will head the team on administrative matters, Yosi Beilin on immigrant matters, and Ori Or on youth matters. 'Uzi Bar'am will be in charge of minorities, Efrayim Sne the ultra-Orthodox sector, and Avraham Shohat additional sectors. David Liba'i will head the platform committee, and Nisim Zvili will be in charge of finances.

Israel: Labor Rejects Charges on Jerusalem, Names Campaign Heads

TA1802065496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Likud is launching its election campaign under the slogan "Peres is partitioning Jerusalem." Knesset Member Limor Livnat, head of the Likud's information committee, said the campaign will reveal details of alleged secret talks already under way with the Palestinians over the division of Jerusalem. The Likud rejected a proposal from Labor Party Secretary Nisim Zvili to sign a pledge to keep Jerusalem out of the campaign.

Zvili warned that debating the status of Jerusalem prior to the elections would weaken Israel's sovereignty over the city. He argued that such rhetoric would give the Palestinians the false illusion that dividing the city could become a political reality.

Tzomet leader Refa'el Eytan said Zvili was deceiving the voting public. He said the Likud-Tzomet ticket would make the status of Jerusalem a priority.

Meanwhile, the Labor Party is busy with election preparations of its own. Interior Minister Hayim Ramon is to head the party's information headquarters during the elections. Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who sought the same duty, is slated to become the head of the party's steering committee, which will, among other things, formulate the political platform. Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal is expected to head the party's organizational headquarters, while Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or will be in charge of the Labor Youth activities. Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Yosi Beilin will oversee party opinion polls during the election campaign, and Housing and Construction Minister Binyamin Ben-Eli'ezer will head campaign headquarters.

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 18 February reports that Ramon "told Qol Yisra'el that the Likud's claim that Peres will partition Jerusalem is totally baseless. He denied that talks on Jerusalem's future are under way and stressed that the city will remain united under Israel's sovereignty."]

Israel: Baraq Pleased To Be Named Peres Campaign Head

TA1902100696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0900 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Minister Ehud Baraq has reacted to the report that he is slated to be appointed head of Peres' personal campaign committee, saying he will view this as a compliment. He noted he would do everything he can to get Peres elected prime minister. Asked about Peres' intention to hold onto the defense portfolio in the next government too, Baraq said Peres is a very good defense minister, and who is filling the position for the second time. At the same time, Baraq believes that thanks to his security background he will continue to take part in the adoption of security and political decisions. He added that he would undertake any key role imposed on him by Mr. Peres.

Israel: Baraq To Handle Public Opinion Polls; Other Appointments Noted

TA1902123496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1200 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The establishment of Labor's campaign committee is nearing completion. Our party affairs correspondent Yaron Deqel reports that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres decided that Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq will also be in charge of handling public opinion polls in the campaign committee, besides his duty as head of Peres' personal campaign committee. Minister Yosi Beilin will handle the immigrants issue in the campaign committee, while Minister Ora Namir will handle the issue of retired people.

Israel: Likud Launches Campaign; Academic on 'Unofficial' Talks

TA1802130896 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1100 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Likud is demanding that the prime minister close down Orient House at once in order to prove his commitment to the principle of Jerusalem's unity. Our correspondent Uri Gordon reports:

[Begin recording] [Gordon] The Likud unveiled its life-size poster and the slogan "Peres is partitioning Jerusalem" at a news conference today. Binyamin Netanyahu launched his party's election campaign with a series of points which could carry the headline: "Why I Do Not Believe Peres." Netanyahu reiterated the allegations about secret talks on the capital's future which, he maintained, are being held in Europe and stressed that

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Orient House and other PLO institutions in the city constitute the Palestinian infrastructure for a future Palestinian capital. The coming elections, Netanyahu said, will be a referendum on the fate of Jerusalem.

[Netanyahu] Mr. Peres has a method: He slips things in and then denies them. He slips in some Palestinian office and then denies it. The public will not have to choose between declarations and denials but rather between a united Jerusalem under a Likud government and a Jerusalem destined to be divided under Mr. Peres' government.

[Gordon] Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert focused his attack on Orient House, which he referred to as a subversive political institution designed to partition the city. He demanded that the prime minister stand behind the statement he made at today's cabinet meeting:

[Olmert] He should close Orient House by the end of February. I am telling you on good authority, because I know from some authoritative Israeli security analysts, that the closure of Orient House will in no way cause the negotiations to be terminated.

[Gordon] The Likud has thus launched its election campaign in high tones, shooting quite a few arrows at the prime minister's credibility. [end recording]

[Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew at 0600 GMT on 18 February reports that "Knesset Member [MK] Limor Livnat, who heads the Likud's information headquarters, said that Ron Pundaq and Ya'ir Hirschfeld, the architects of the Oslo agreement, are holding talks on Jerusalem with Shim'on Peres' knowledge. Livnat called Nisim Zvili's proposal to sign a manifesto to keep Jerusalem out of the campaign a feeble election ploy. She suggested that the Labor Party support the draft bill submitted by Likud MK 'Uzi Landau that would make any changes in Jerusalem's status conditional on a special Knesset majority."]

Ron Pundaq, one of the architects of the Oslo accords, reacted to the Likud's public relations campaign this morning, saying that he has indeed been holding talks with Palestinians on the future of Jerusalem. Speaking to our correspondent this morning, Pundaq said, however, that these were unofficial talks on which Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has not been briefed.

[Begin Pundaq recording] We are naturally thinking about these ideas and discussing them with various Jews, Arabs, and Europeans. We have been discussing practically every option in the framework of the arrangement, and to tell you the truth, I hope there are people in the Likud — intelligent and moderate people like Dan Meridor or Me'ir Shitrit — who realize that eternal naysaying is impossible and that feasible, functional solutions have to be considered. [end recording]

Israel: Settlers Launch Election Campaign Backing Netanyahu

TA1902105996 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 19 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Herb Keinon]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With his mustache, barrel chest, pointer, and large green charts, Aharon Domb struck a field commander's pose while addressing a Jerusalem meeting of "national camp" campaign activists yesterday.

"Whoever thinks he can force someone to think like him through an aggressive manner is mistaken," Domb said. Then he unveiled the Council of Jewish Communities in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza's campaign for Binyamin Netanyahu and the "national camp."

Domb spoke like a military man, stressing the bottom line of goals, timetables, even "protecting the rear." Behind him at the Tiqvatenu Community Center were banners with the slogan he hopes will be ubiquitous on the country's roads: "I feel secure in the national camp."

"Contrary to press reports, we are not running a negative campaign against Shim'on Peres," Domb said. "And the reason is because we want Netanyahu to be the next prime minister."

Referring to the Rabin assassination, Domb said "Since something happened in Israel — and we can not ignore that something happened in Israel — we must pay attention and not give our enemies Eretz Yisra'el on a silver platter. Even beyond taking a life, or taking the life of the prime minister, what happened has given Eretz Yisra'el to our enemies."

A solo voice then shouted out, "And that is why he (Rabin) was killed."

Domb and public relations man Dov Har'el explained that the objective of the first phase of the campaign is to create an atmosphere where the 10 percent of the population targeted as "undecided voters" will see that there is massive support for the Right.

After the Rabin assassination, Har'el explained, many people who sympathized with the Right went "underground," were embarrassed, took bumper stickers off their cars, and abandoned the street to the Left.

The campaign's immediate goal, according to the brochure handed out to some 200 activists, is "to unify and solidify the national camp, with all its parties, and create a public atmosphere of identification with the

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Right." In the second stage the campaign will then try to convince the undecided to vote for Netanyahu.

One number repeated over and over by both speakers was 83,987 — the number of votes "wasted" in 1992 on small right-wing parties that failed to pass the electoral threshold. These votes, had they gone to one of the right-wing parties that made it into the Knesset, would have tipped the balance of power.

"If it wasn't for these votes" Domb said, "we would not be caught in Oslo's dire straits."

Israel: Minister Bar'am Sees Orient House as 'Minor Issue'

TA1802103696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 18 Feb 96 p B3

[Report by Ori Nir]

[FBIS Translated Text] Tourism Minister 'Uzi Bar'am, speaking during a tour of East Jerusalem organized by the Labor Young Guard, said that Israel should avoid conflicts over visits by foreign officials to Orient House. He was speaking at the gates of Orient House but did not enter the building.

Bar'am said: "I do not care if the Danish foreign minister visits this place; let her. This will not constitute recognition of Arab and Palestinian legitimacy in East Jerusalem. Our party does not deal with tokens of esteem." According to him, "those who keep saying that any visit to Orient House jeopardizes Jerusalem's status have themselves turned this place into what it is now. I also reject some of the opinions expressed by several Labor ministers on the issue."

He added: "I believe they are making a big thing out of a minor issue. I do not believe that the Orient House affair will impede the negotiations on Israel's sovereignty in Jerusalem. Even if the Palestinians want signs of identity in the city — and we cannot deny that there is a large Palestinian population in the city — I would not turn this into such a major international incident," Bar'am said.

Israel: Shahal Urges Halt to Ministerial Visits to Orient House

TA1802200096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

['Imanu'el Rosen video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Minister Moshe Shahal adopted an initiative of his own today, declaring that he has suggested that Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq stop visits by foreign ministers to East Jerusalem's Orient House. The prime minister was not party to this initiative, while Foreign Minister baraq's confidants also say that nobody mentioned this to them. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports on Jerusalem's political status on the eve of elections.

[Begin recording] [Rosen] Likud's propaganda on the Jerusalem issue has affected at least one cabinet minister, who today declared war against Orient House.

[Shahal] I informed the foreign minister that I would not allow such visits and asked him to ensure that this be brought to the attention of visiting foreign ministers.

[Rosen] The problem with this initiative is that Shim'on Peres was not a party to it, Baraq's close associates say nobody discussed this with them, and senior political elements make it clear that there is no intention or chance of implementing this. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israel: Shahal Bans Foreign Ministers' Visits to Orient House

TA1902054596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0500 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal has decided not to allow visits by ministers of foreign affairs to Orient House anymore. Today the minister informed Prime Minister Shim'on Peres and Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, in writing, that he has adopted the decision by virtue of his authority in the framework of the implementation of the Oslo accords.

Israel: Orient House Ruling Could Affect Visits by Kinkel, Others

TA2002092496 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 20 Feb 96 pp 1-2

[Report by David Makovsky]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The Foreign Ministry is weighing whether to ask foreign dignitaries to delay their trips here until after the elections to avoid a diplomatic confrontation over visits to Orient House, Foreign Ministry officials indicated yesterday.

It is possible that even in the absence of an explicit Foreign Ministry appeal, foreign officials would decide not to visit during the election campaign, should Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal ban visits to Orient House.

The cancellations, should they occur, would mark the first diplomatic casualty of the partisan debate, following the Likud's allegation earlier this week that Prime Minister Shim'on Peres would partition Jerusalem if elected. Peres has termed the charge "incitement" and "character assassination."

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After the Likud allegation, Shahal sent a letter to Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq urging him to cooperate in ensuring that visiting foreign ministers do not stop at Orient House. His aides said the move was needed so Orient House would not become a Palestinian Authority mini-foreign ministry. [passage omitted]

Baraq asked Peres to hold consultations on the issue between the two of them and Shahal, Foreign Ministry officials said.

"We are waiting for the consultations of the three now," a senior ministry official said. "If they decide to follow Shahal and prevent foreign ministers from visiting Orient House, there were those at today's meeting of top-level Foreign Ministry officials who suggested appealing to German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, who is coming on March 3, and others to postpone their visits."

Another Foreign Ministry official predicted that such an appeal to Germany would be "likely, since this has all become so politically explosive now. The Likud is saying the battle for Jerusalem has begun. Labor cannot take any chances."

German Ambassador Franz Bertele said he is aware Shahal's decision could affect whether Kinkel will visit. "We are watching this situation very closely. We understand that it is a difficult time now. We shall see," he said.

Diplomats in Jerusalem were embarrassed over the prospect of calling for a delay in Kinkel's visit, as Germany has been a leading advocate of Israeli concerns within the European Union. [passage omitted]

Israel: Baraq To Visit Russia Amid Signs of 'Difficulties'

TA2002103796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq plans to pay a short visit to Russia as soon as possible because of signs of difficulties in relations between the two countries, our political correspondent Shlomo Raz reports.

Minister Baraq conferred with Russian Ambassador Aleksandr Bovin with whom he discussed an array of subjects linked to Russian-Israeli ties, such as Russia's assets in Israel, the sale of a nuclear reactor to Iran, and Russia's wish to instill real content into its role as sponsor of the peace process in the region. Our correspondent adds that Jerusalem is worried about the positions Russia in general, and Foreign Minister Primakov in particular, will adopt prior to this summer's Russian elections.

The Russian Embassy in Tel Aviv disseminated an interview by Andrey Vdovin, head of the Foreign Ministry's Middle East Department, in which he said that Russia regards as a realistic possibility its participation in activities to assure peace on the Golan Heights. Vdovin said that Russia's new foreign minister is currently working with his Middle East counterparts on the precise character of their relations with Russia.

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Jordan: Husayn Kamil Reportedly Holding Talks on Return to Iraq

NC1902095596 Paris AFP in English 0923 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, Feb 19 (AFP)— A son-in-law of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn who defected to Jordan last August is in contact with the Baghdad government to negotiate his return, he said Monday [19 February].

"My return to Iraq is not far off. It's a question which will be decided at the end of the dialogue that I have undertaken with the Iraqi government," General Husayn Kamil Hasan told AFP in Amman.

The former industry minister and chief of Iraq's weapons procurement programme said he had "no quarrel with Iraqi President Saddam Husayn" and that his contacts with Baghdad had never been broken off.

Married to a daughter of the president, Raghdah, he defected on August 8 together with his brother Colonel Saddam Kamil Hasan who is married to another of Saddam's daughters, Rana.

At an Amman press conference on August 12, the general called for the overthrow of the Iraqi government.

But in an interview last week, Hasan said the situation had improved in Baghdad, especially since the start of Iraqi-UN talks aimed at easing the sanctions in place since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

He also welcomed political reforms undertaken by Saddam's government.

Jordan: Radio Reports on New Iraqi Opposition Group

JN1702095096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An Iraqi opposition movement — the National Accord Movement — disclosed that it was setting up an office in Amman. The movement will hold a news conference in Amman tomorrow to officially announce the movement and to explain its objectives and principles.

This is the first time an Iraqi opposition movement has announced it will open an office in the Jordanian capital. Most Iraqi opposition leaders are based in Damascus, Tehran, or London.

Jordan: Iraqi Opposition Group To Open Office in Amman

JN1802083796 Amman AL-HADATH in Arabic 21 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] The National Accord Movement, a prominent Iraqi opposition group, will open an office in Amman.

Movement sources said that Iyad 'Alawi, the movement's secretary general, Dr. Tahsin Mu'alla, Salah al-Shaykhali, and Hamid al-Juburi will address a [news] conference. The conference will also be addressed by Major General [rank as published] Najib al-Salihi, chief of staff of the 1st Mechanized Division, one of the biggest Iraqi military divisions. Al-Salihi fled to northern Iraq about 40 days ago and announced that he is joining the movement.

The sources denied that Maj. Gen. al-Salihi, who arrived in Jordan two days ago, will have any contact with Lieutenant General Husayn Kamil Hasan. The sources stressed that Maj. Gen. al-Salihi is a member of the movement and abides by its decisions.

The National Accord Movement has military and popular bases inside Iraq. It also has bases for its forces in the Kurdish region in northern Iraq.

Jordan: Iraqi Opposition Group Announces Opening of Amman Office

JN1802130596 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Report by Randah Habib in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr.Iyad 'Alawi, secretary general of an Iraqi opposition movement, the National Accord Movement, has announced that the movement's regional office for political and media activities to save Iraq from its tribulation will be in Amman.

At a news conference at one of Amman's big hotels, the leaders of this movement, which was established outside Jordan five years ago, announced their names and defined their objectives to serve their country and end the oppressive regime there.

In addition to 'Alawi, the movement leaders are economist Salah al-Shaykhali; Staff Brigadier General Najib Mustafa Mahdi Salihi, who fled Iraq four months ago; Hamid 'Alwan al-Juburi, former minister and Iraqi ambassador to Tunisia until he defected in August 1993; Tahsin (Mulih), former Iraqi ambassador to Algeria; and Special Forces Brigadier General 'Adnan Muhammad al-Nuri.

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The movement said it held contacts with the foreign ministries of all the countries in the region — except Israel — particularly Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Kuwait. It also exchanged views with European countries, particularly Russia and France.

The Iraqi National Accord Movement secretary general said that the opposition paper BAGHDAD, is published by the movement in Irbil, Damascus, and London, will also be published in Amman. He said he hopes the movement will establish a radio station somewhere in the world and added that the movement has a radio station that operates from Iraqi Kurdistan.

The movement praised Jordan's support, particularly King Husayn's support for the Iraqi people.

This is the first time that Amman has publicly acted as host for an Iraqi opposition office.

Jordan: News Conference Marks Opening of Iraqi Opposition Office

JN1802193496 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 18 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report over video]

[FBIS Translated Text] At a news conference held in Amman today, the Iraqi National Accord Movement announced a new chapter of its endeavor to end the suffering of the Iraqi people and enhance respect for human rights, as well as internal political freedom.

At a news conference to mark the opening of the movement's regional office in Amman, Iyad 'Alawi, Secretary General of the movement, thanked His Majesty King Husayn and the Jordanian Government for supporting the Iraqi people.

He said that the Amman office is among the offices that will be opened in the region in the future. He asserted that the office has a political and informational role and is in line with the principles Jordan adopts in support of the Iraqi people's right to a free, honorable life under democracy, political pluralism, and respect for human rights.

'Alawi also said that the change his movement is seeking is in harmony with these principles and is based on the principle of noninterference in the domestic affairs of others and respect for international law. He asserted that his movement is in contact with most countries of the region, particularly Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Kuwait and that it has channels of communication with Russia and France.

'Alawi then presented to journalists five civilian and military members of his movement.

Jordan: Opposition Group Claims Military Support Inside Iraq

JN1902103496 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 19 Feb 96 pp 1, 3

[Report by Sa'idah Kilani]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — An Iraqi opposition group Sunday announced that it is opening offices in Amman in a bid to end the plight of the Iraqi people who have been suffering under the five-year-old U.N.-imposed economic embargo.

The offices of the National Accord Movement, whose headquarters is in the north of Iraq and which has offices in London and Damascus will open its offices in Amman shortly after Al-Fitr feast.

The leader of the movement, Iyyad 'Alawi, said at a press conference held at the InterContinental Hotel that the movement mainly aims at promoting democracy and pluralism in Iraq and alleviating the suffering of the Iraqi people. Mr. 'Alawi said the movement coordinates with all other countries who seek to achieve the same objectives.

"We try to cooperate with all countries except Israel," he said.

The movement, established in 1991, groups a range of people including ex-army officers. Its leaders claimed that there were army defectors "in hundreds" and they are trying to join the movement. The leaders said they were working on building a qualified and capable army from within the movement and on recruiting other members from within the Iraqi military. They said their office in Amman will be a regional one and they would focus on information and propaganda about Iraq, including plans to print an Amman edition of their newspaper, BAGHDAD.

Commenting on the announcement yesterday, the government reiterated its policy of non-interference in other countries' internal affairs but said that "it will not stand in the way of groups or organisations which work for humanitarian causes through peaceful and political means."

A government official told the JORDAN TIMES that Jordan's main concern was to "alleviate the suffering of Iraqis under U.N. sanctions. Any group that has the same goals will not find itself in conflict with Jordan." The movement's speaker Salah Shaykhali said the movement, which has its own broadcasting station in Iraq and a weekly newspaper, did not receive any financial backing from any party and is totally independent.

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Asked on Jordan's stand towards Iraq, Mr. 'Alawi said that His Majesty King Husayn had "very clearly outlined the Kingdom's keenness on preserving the unity of the Iraqi people and expressed his support for any decision taken by the Iraqi people," he added.

Mr. 'Alawi said the movement had earlier met with the King but did not specify when or the exact details of the meeting. He expressed hope that other meetings with the King and Jordanian officials would take place.

It is the first time that Jordan has publicly welcomed an Iraqi opposition group in the Kingdom. The move comes after Jordan has made major strides towards improving its relations with other Arab countries, the Gulf states in particular.

The King last week made two visits to Egypt and Saudi Arabia, aimed at coordinating efforts towards the situation in Iraq and other pending issues. The King's visit to Saudi Arabia, which was described as very successful, was the King's first official trip to the Saudi Kingdom since the Gulf crisis in 1990. Relations were strained ever since between the two countries for what was perceived as the Kingdom's tilt in favour of Iraq during the war.

"Our main aim is to bring democracy to Iraq," Mr. 'Alawi said. "Our mission here is purely political and informational. That is to explain the suffering of the Iraqi people and to lobby, from Jordan, for our just cause."

Mr. 'Alawi denied the movement had any links with General Husayn Kamil, the architect of Iraq's weapon programme, who defected to Jordan last August with his brother and their two wives the daughters of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn.

He said: "Gen. Kamil has his own programme and the movement does not have any relationship with him."

He said that Iraqi opposition groups do not have a unified programme but are working closely with each other.

"For the first time, the Iraqi opposition is working together in a healthy and democratic atmosphere," he said. "We agree on many things but we have our differences and we deal with them in a civilised manner."

He insisted that the bulk of the Accord Movement is in Iraq. "There is a fraction of Iraqi military and Iraqi people here but our strong base is in Iraq," he said.

Mr. 'Alawi thanked the Jordanian government for housing the movement.

Jordan: 'Joint Statement' Industrial Team's Visit to Iraq

JN1702192396 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 11

[Joint statement on a visit to Iraq by a Jordanian industrial delegation issued in Baghdad on 12 February]

[FBIS Translated Text] In response to an invitation from the Iraqi Federation of Industries [IFI] and the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce [FICC], and under the sponsorship of Iraq's Minister of Trade Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Salih and Minister of Industry and Minerals 'Adnan al-'Ani, a high-level Jordanian industrial delegation visited Iraq 9-14 February 1996. The delegation was headed by Khaldun Abu-Hassan, head of the Amman Chamber of Industry, and comprised members of the chamber's board, heads of advisory industrial sector committees, and a group of Jordanian industrialists who represent various Jordanian industrial and economic establishments. The delegation had carried with it an quantity of medicine as a gift from the Amman Chamber of Industry and from Jordanian industrialists to the fraternal people of Iraq.

During its visit to Baghdad, the delegation met with the ministers of industry, health, trade, agriculture, and finance and a number of Iraqi officials. The meetings were attended by Bassam Qaqish, Jordanian ambassador in Baghdad. The delegation also held a number of meetings with the head and members of the IFI and the FICC.

The joint committee emanating from the IFI, FICC, and the Amman Chamber of Industry held its third session. As part of the program set for its visit, the delegation listened to a detailed briefing by Iraqi ministers and officials on the prevailing industrial and economic situation in Iraq and on the plight of the fraternal Iraqi people as a result of the continued unjust embargo.

The head and members of the Jordanian delegation hoped that the unjust embargo on the Iraqi people would be lifted so that the Iraqi brothers would be able to reconstruct their country and live a decent life and so that Iraq would assume its distinguished role on the Arab and international levels. The head and members of the delegation admired the high efficiency of the Iraqi people and technical bodies, which managed to deal with the equipment and materials available under the unjust embargo on the dear people of Iraq.

The delegation stresses the need to lift the unjust embargo as soon as possible and end the suffering of the Iraqi people as a result of the shortage of food, medicine, and life's basic necessities after Iraq has demonstrated full compliance with the UN resolutions.

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During its meetings, the joint Jordanian-Iraqi industrial and commercial private sector committee stressed a number of constants and principles of work within the course of economic relations between the two fraternal countries in the current and future stages. The committee stresses the basic constants by underlining the importance of the Jordanian industrial delegation's visit to Iraq and the importance of continuing to hold meetings between the two sides in Amman and Baghdad.

1. The Jordanian-Iraqi relations are historical and strategic, and each country constitutes a strong support for the other, and Jordan is the strategic depth of Iraq, the same as Iraq is the strategic depth of Jordan.

2. The two sides emphasize the need to continue building on the achievements realized in Jordanian-Iraqi relations and their positive aspects, using all available capabilities to enhance and develop these achievements. and to move toward advanced bilateral cooperation in the industrial, investment, and commercial fields.

3. The economic relations have grown well and normally between the two countries, which responds to the will of the two fraternal peoples in Iraq and Jordan. This emphasizes the importance of preserving industrial investments in Jordan with the aim of supplying the Iraqi market with its needs of commodities based on the excellent bilateral relations.

4. Iraq fully understands the financial and monetary circumstances facing Jordan as a result of financing Jordanian exports to Iraq. The private sector in the two countries is working to keep the volume of economic exchanges within their normal range in order to emphasize the need to overcome this issue and look to future relations in a positive manner. The Iraqi side hailed the efforts made by the Amman Chamber of Industry by presenting a detailed report on Jordanian-Iraqi economic relations, which was received by the IFI and FICC. The report emphasized the ability of the private sector in the two countries to lead economic cooperation within the framework of the official instructions in the two countries and in order to lay down the bases for bilateral industrial integration so that this will become a model for other Arab countries.

5. The two sides emphasized the importance of continuing coordination of positions at the conferences of Arab chambers and Arab and international businessmen. They stressed the importance of Arab economic cooperation to face the international economic blocs and the challenges of the stage that are imposed by the GATT and World Trade Organization agreements and international standards.

6. The Iraqi quarters expressed thanks and appreciation for the Amman Chamber of Industry, both its head and board, and for the Jordanian industrial sector for their fraternal position on Iraq and the Iraqi people, and for the assistance and facilities the chamber extends to Iraqi businessmen during their presence in Jordan to enable them to carry out their economic activities.

7. Khaldun Abu-Hassan, head of the Jordanian delegation, thanked the Iraqi brothers in his name and on behalf of the delegation and the Jordanian industrial sector, for the warm reception he and the delegation were accorded by all official and popular quarters and the IFI and FICC, as well as the executive cadres of the two federations.

8. It was decided to hold the fourth session of the joint committee in Amman at a date to be decided later.

Written in Baghdad on Monday 12 February 1996.

Jordan: Chamber of Industry Says Iraq To Supply Natural Gas

JN1802124696 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 18 Feb 96 p 24

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, AL-DUSTUR — Amman Chamber of Industry sources told AL-DUSTUR that Iraqi Oil Minister Lieutenant General 'Amir Rashid agreed to supply Jordan with its needs of natural gas at a rate of 200 metric tonnes per day. Iraq also agreed to supply Jordan with base oil, which is necessary for the automobile engine oils industry.

During his meeting with the head of the Amman Chamber of Industry, who led the Jordanian industrial delegation that visited Baghdad last week, the Iraqi oil minister agreed to supply Jordan with specialized trucks to transport the imported gas from al-'Aqabah Port to the Jordan Petroleum Refinery.

It is noteworthy that Jordan used to import part of its needs of oil from Turkey and Lebanon by sea.

During his visit to Iraq, the head of the Amman Chamber of Industry held talks with a number of Iraqi ministers on areas of cooperation and trade between the two countries.

Jordan: Security Agencies Reportedly Prevent Anti-Israel Operation

JN1802121296 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 19 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Jordanian security agencies last week prevented a major martyrdom-seeking operation against Israeli targets to west of the Jordan River.

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AL-MAJD learned that Jordanian security agencies arrested three young Islamists in Dayr 'Alla area last week. They were travelling in a car laden with explosives and heading toward the Jordan River. The three young men were identified as 'Ikrimah al-Gharayibah, an architect, Yusuf 'Abd-al-Karim Rabayi'ah, who holds a masters degree in archaeology, and 'Ali Muhammad al-Faqir, who holds a degree in Islamic law.

Relatives of the three detainees told AL-MAJD that their relatives are now being subjected to thorough investigations to reveal the circumstances of this case and the parties involved in it.

Jordan: 'Observers' Comment on King's Visits to Saudi Arabia, Egypt

JN1702093796 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by Muhammad Masahriqah]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman — Many questions remain unanswered regarding the actual results of His Majesty King Husayn visits last week to Saudi Arabia and Egypt, despite official optimism over the outcome of the two visits especially in removing the clouds that have hung over relations since the Gulf war.

According to a senior official the Iraq question was high on the agenda of both the Mecca and Cairo summits between the King on the one hand and Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdullah and President Husni Mubarak on the other.

The official said that agreement was reached during those two meetings on a number of points, high among them was on the direct responsibility of the Iraqi regime for the miserable situation that the Iraqi people has reached and that it had become extremely difficult, or almost impossible, to rehabilitate the regime within the prevailing regional and international environment.

The official said that the basic agreement arrived at in the discussions among Jordanian, Saudi and Egyptian leaders was that a change of regime in Iraq, when it comes, should be left for the Iraqi people themselves to bring about. There was also a tacit understanding that Jordan's "peaceful" regional role should be recognised.

More Arab politicians and Iraqi opposition figures increasingly believe that "change will have to come from inside Iraq" with support coming from the neighbouring countries only if and when it is needed to either prevent a bloodshed or a break-up of the country into ethnic regions or statelets.

The observers say that U.S. Secretary of Defence William Perry's recent statements about U.S. cooperation with other countries in the region to accelerate the demise of the Iraqi regime should be taken seriously. They are convinced that King Husayn had exchanged information with the other Arab leaders over what Mr. Perry had in mind.

It is in light of all these developments "that Jordan's latest moves to coordinate with Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Morocco took place," one observer said.

Informed sources say that the U.S. has put pressure on Damascus to ensure that Syria does not play a spoiler role in efforts over Iraq. They say that the U.S. in order to smooth the way for change in Baghdad, has also intensified its efforts on the Syrian-Israeli track and showed much more understanding for Syria's role in Lebanon.

Damascus was recently reported as contemplating holding a conference for Iraqi opposition and at the same time sent mixed signals to Baghdad. These were seen as an attempt to circumvent not only any role for Jordan in Iraq but also any regional effort that involves Jordan as a partner.

A leading Jordanian politician notes that Jordan's position towards Iraq has evolved constantly since the defection of President Saddam Husayn's son-in-law General Husayn Kamil to Jordan in august.

That, according to the politician, came in response to fierce resistance put up by other regional forces in Riyadh, Cairo, Damascus and Tehran against the Jordanian role.

The politician adds that Jordan's real aims were misinterpreted in the neighbouring countries. "The four players — Riyadh, Cairo, Damascus and Tehran — did not show any real support for Jordan's regional role."

The positive signs that came out of the King and Crown Prince Hasan's visits to the four countries indicate a middle-of-the-road meeting among the centres of power in the region, prompting the king to describe these moves as successes that Jordan's foreign policy has met with.

Jordan: Sources Expect Release of Prisoners in Kuwait

JN1702182596 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 17 Feb 96 p 1

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Qaq]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman — Well-informed sources told AL-DUSTUR that His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Sabah, the amir of Kuwait, signed a decree to release all Jordanian prisoners in Kuwaiti

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jails, including both those who are convicted of crimes or those who cooperated with the occupation authorities following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990.

The sources said the prisoners will be released probably on Kuwait's national day, which will be celebrated officially on 25 February. The sources said such a decision will greatly help to improve ties between the two countries and falls within the context of the policy of detente after the Gulf War.

Muhammad al-Rumayhi, envoy of His Highness Shaykh Sa'd al- 'Abdallah al-Sabah, the Kuwaiti heir apparent, conveyed a message to His Highness Crown Prince Hasan regarding Kuwait's desire to take practical steps that can help reopen embassies and restore bilateral ties to their past condition.

Before leaving Amman on Thursday, Muhammad al-Rumayhi told AL- DUSTUR that he was very pleased to convey a message from his highness the Kuwaiti heir apparent to His Highness the Jordanian crown prince. He said that he felt great understanding from His Highness Crown Prince Hasan and keenness to strengthen bilateral cooperation and restore ties to normal. He stressed that his highness the Kuwaiti heir apparent underlined the issue of developing cooperation to benefit the interests of the two sisterly states in order to overcome the past phase and start a new one based on full understanding and cooperation. [passage omitted]

AL-DUSTUR learned that the restoration of Jordanian-Kuwaiti ties will be announced after the 'Id al-Fitr holiday. They said the Kuwaiti Embassy's national day celebrations on Sunday, 25 February will be the first [since the Gulf war] and will constitute a serious step to bridge the gap between the two countries.

Political sources told AL-DUSTUR that Kuwait Airways will resume its flights between Kuwait and Jordan in the next two months and that meetings in this regard will be held between Jordanian and Kuwaiti officials after 'Id al-Fitr. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Direct Telephone Links With Kuwait Restored

JN2002095196 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic
20 Feb 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—PETRA—Marwan 'Awad, minister of finance and acting minister of post and telecommunications, reported that Kuwait decided to restore direct telephone links between the two fraternal countries as of 20 February.

Direct telephone links between Jordan and Kuwait were cut following the Gulf war. Since then, calls were placed through a third country — the United States — which resulted in extra costs for those using the telephone service.

Jordan: New Director General of Justice Ministry Appointed

JN1802105096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic
18 Feb 96 p 25

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman, PETRA — A royal decree has been issued appointing Dr. Mustafa al-'Assaf as director general of the Justice Ministry as of 16 February. It was also decided to appoint Dr. al-'Assaf as acting director of the Jordanian Judicial Academy as of 14 February.

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Lebanon: Al-Hariri — Parliamentary Election To Be Held on Time

NC1702072996 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri stated that the government is working with President al-Hirawi on the details of the president's election initiative. Upon completion, he added, this initiative will make its way to the Constitutional institutions, which will have the final say in determining the election law.

Prime Minister al-Hariri called on all Lebanese political forces to conduct a serious and responsible dialogue on President al-Hirawi's proposal. He stressed that the parliamentary election will be held on time as outlined by the Constitution, and that the government will be fully responsible for making the legal preparations for the election. He noted that calls for extending the term of the Chamber of Deputies only weaken the democratic process.

Prime Minister al-Hariri made these remarks during a banquet he hosted in honor of the al-Maqasid Islamic Society, which was attended by a number of former prime ministers, ministers, deputies, and political figures.

Lebanon: Editorial Condemns King Husayn for 'Treachery'

NC1602152696 Beirut AL-SHIRA' in Arabic 12 Feb 96 p 3

[Editorial by Muhammad Sabra: "Beware of the King of the Entity"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] If we were to list the reasons tilting the balance of power in the Arab-Zionist conflict in favor of the Zionist enemy for 40 years, the most important one would be the presence of the entity known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan headed by [King] Husayn.

This entity, created by Britain, which also created the Zionist entity, has been the fifth column in the body of the Arab nation, spewing on it treachery and treason. This regime has remained the permanent ally of the Zionist entity. It was there when the Israelis achieved their gains at the expense of the Arab nation. [passage omitted]

The Jordanian entity is the Zionist gateway to the Arab homeland and the Islamic world. All the agreements Israel has signed with Arab countries have passed through Husayn, king of the Jordanian entity, his "mediation," his love for the Jews, and his betrayal of the Arabs and Muslims.

Right now, Husayn, the king of this entity, has moved to another phase of treachery against Iraq and Syria. He has sold all the nation's sacred values and honorable history with a view to closing the future before it. He wants to dismember Iraq to subdue it into forging a conciliation with the Zionist enemy. He wants to extend the bridges of treachery with Turkey to encircle Syria and Iraq and link up with the other bridges of the Zionist enemy and the village headman [Yasir 'Arafat], who is sitting in a corner of Palestine, happy as an ape, licking his own wounds. [passage omitted]

Islam and Arabism concern him not, only weeping over Rabin. The history and future of the Arabs and Muslims concern him not, only the future of his cousins, the Jews. [passage omitted] How can Husayn, the king of the entity, weep copiously over the war criminal, Rabin, and not shed one crocodile tear for the children of Iraq, half a million of whom have died in five years because of his advice to the callous regime in Iraq? How can the village headman of Jericho [Yasir 'Arafat] be happy licking his own wounds when he has sold the sacred land of grandfathers cheap, for less than the price of a band aid to dress his wound? [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Death Toll From Collapsed Building Reaches 14

NC1702070196 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] While efforts continue to remove the debris and recover bodies from the collapsed building in Wadi Abu Jamil, the death toll in the incident has reached 14.

Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri regrets the incident, which he said has broken the hearts of all. He added: I reiterate my full commitment to conduct a thorough investigation to determine who was responsible for it. He called on all parties to exercise caution and act calmly to let justice take its course.

Yesterday, the Solidere Company issued a statement regretting the incident and expressing interest in revealing the truth about it.

Lebanon: Hizballah To Release 3 SLA Prisoners on 'Id al-Fitr

NC2002093696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the occasion of 'Id al-Fitr, Hizballah announced that at 1000 [0800 GMT] today, it will release three South Lebanese Army [SLA] prisoners. One prisoner is Tariq Ja'far from Mays al-Jabal, captured on 16 February 1992 in an operation

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to storm the Tallusah post. Another is Maurice George Abu-Milhab from Qabb Ilyas, captured on 1 May 1986 during a military operation on Lusi. The third is Kamil Shuhaymah from Markaba, captured on 19 May 1992 during an operation on the 'Alman post. Their release will take place at the headquarters of Hizballah's central information unit in the presence of their families.

[In a related Beirut-datelined report at 0904 GMT on 20 February, Paris AFP in English adds: "A statement issued by the Muslim Shiite fundamentalists on Monday [19 February] called on SLA militiamen to desert the Israeli-trained and financed group.

["'We guarantee to protect those who come to us saying they regret having collaborated with the enemy and its agents,' the statement said.

["'The release of these prisoners proves our positive attitude to those who decide to abandon now their SLA positions,' it added.

["According to Israeli military sources, 200 militiamen or eight percent of its manpower have deserted the SLA since 1994.

["Some joined Hizballah, which spearheads attacks against Israeli forces occupying an 850 square kilometre (340 square mile) 'security zone' in southern Lebanon."]

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief—Guerrillas Proud of Being 'Terrorists'

NC1702092996 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yesterday, Muslims and the oppressed celebrated World Jerusalem Day, called for by the late Imam Khomeyni, who triggered the Islamic revolution in the face of world arrogance and agents. Millions took to the streets to renew their determination to continue their jihad.

In al-Ghubayrah Square, a rally was held in which Hizballah Secretary General His Eminence Hasan Nasrallah spoke. Iranian Ambassador Homayun 'Ali Zadeh and Ramadan 'Aballah, secretary general of the Islamic Jihad in Palestine, also spoke at the rally.

Al-Sayyid Nasrallah said: We meet today to commemorate the fourth martyrdom anniversary of [former Hizballah Secretary General] 'Abbas al-Musawi, the most prominent martyr of the Islamic Resistance, his wife, and child. We also mark the day set by the late Imam Khomeyni as World Jerusalem Day, on the last Friday of the blessed month of Ramadan, the best month of the year.

His eminence added: It was this Islamic revolution that gave rise to the Islamic Resistance, which adopted the spirit, hopes, will, and determination of Imam Khomeyni to continue the revolution against the tyrants until victory or martyrdom. He noted that Jerusalem Day is the day of all Palestine and all occupied land in south Lebanon, Western al-Biqa', and the Golan, and the day of the prisoners, martyrs, and the wounded. It is a symbol of dignity, marks an awareness of the Islamic revolution and awakening, and serves as an opportunity to renew our determination.

[In a related Beirut-datelined report, Paris AFP in English at 1452 GMT on 16 February adds: "Hizoallah guerrillas are proud of being terrorists, the head of the Iranian-backed group declared Friday [16 February] at a huge anti-Israeli rally in Beirut.

["'The United States accuses us of being terrorists and many people are scared of this accusation,' Hizballah Secretary General Shaykh Hasan Nasrallah said.

["'President Bill Clinton should remember this: the sons of Hizballah are terrorists and will continue to be so until the nation of Islam recovers its pride and its sacred territory,' he said."]

Lebanon: Trial of SLA Commander Adjourned to 22 Mar

NC1602171796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The standing military court presided over by Brigadier General 'Abd-al-Hamid Khurbutli has adjourned to 22 March the trial of Antoine Lahd, commander of the southern militia [South Lebanese Army], and Etienne Saqr, leader of the Guardian of the Cedar Party, on charges of collaborating with the Israeli army. The trial was adjourned because a summons could not be delivered to them.

Lebanon: 2 SLA Soldiers Hurt in Explosion in South

NC1602152496 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] An explosive charge went off along the al-Rayhan road as a South Lebanese Army [SLA] patrol was passing this morning. Two members of the patrol were slightly hurt. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Israelis Pound Areas, Islamic Resistance Claims Attacks

NC1602204796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At 2100 today Israeli helicopters raked the Jabal al-Dahr hills and al-Surayri. Meanwhile

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Israeli artillery in Zummarayya pounded Jabal al-Dhar and the vicinity of 'Ayn Fujur.

The Islamic Resistance released a statement tonight saying some of its fighters this afternoon attacked the Israeli posts in al-Hirdawn, Blat, al-Qawzah, Humayd, and Rshaf. The statement noted that these attacks inflicted casualties on enemy personnel.

Lebanon: South 'Tense' After Bombardment, 'Resistance' Operations

NC1702081496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The situation in the south is very tense, and there is concern about renewed Israeli escalation. Overnight, several villages were targeted by Israeli aggression and strafing operations that lasted until early this morning. [passage omitted]

More than 550 shells of various calibers have fallen on the southern villages adjacent to the combat lines, wounding a number of citizens, including some children.

The resistance fighters responded by carrying out more than 25 attacks against the enemy positions in the occupied border zone, inflicting casualties. The enemy admitted that an Israeli officer and five members of Agent Lahd Militia [South Lebanese Army] had been wounded in the attacks.

The Islamic Resistance has claimed responsibility for these attacks, which mark World Jerusalem Day. The Amal Movement announced that for over two hours its groups engaged enemy helicopters that tried to raid civilian targets on the outskirts of Kafra, Yatar, and Zibqin. Amal added that its fighters attacked enemy military vehicles in Humayyid and Rshaf, inflicting casualties.

[Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic on 0630 GMT adds: "While Muslims were celebrating World Jerusalem Day called for by the late Imam Khomeyni, the south and Western al-Biqa' were the target of brutal Israeli aggression. More than 500 splinter and phosphorous shells landed on homes and fields, causing civilian casualties as well as serious property damage. The aggression coincided with threats against the Islamic Resistance and warnings against responding with Katyushas. Observers note that there has not been any official Lebanese reaction to the Zionist shelling against dozens of southern villages. Meanwhile Hizballah Secretary General His Eminence al-Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah emphasized that the Islamic Resistance insists on its right to protect civilians. He called for more qualitative and martyrdom-type operations."]

Lebanon: Israeli Bombardment, 'Resistance' Operation Reported

NC1702204596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening, the Israeli forces bombarded the Kafr Rumman areas and the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa and the Lebanese army's derelict barracks in al-Nabatiyah with 155-mm field artillery and 120-mm mortar. The bombardment was accompanied by raking with machine guns.

According to security sources, at 2030 today, the resistance forces attacked the Israeli position in al-Dabshah using machine guns and rockets.

Lebanon: Clashes, Israeli Landing Operation Reported

NC1802125796 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Tension is simmering on the various contact lines in the south and Western al-Biqa' in the wake of military developments in these areas last night and early today.

Groups of the Lebanese resistance retaliated for the Israeli attacks this morning. The resistance groups carried out a military operation against the occupation positions in Hula and al-Qantarah, using machine guns and rockets. [passage omitted]

Elsewhere, enemy gunboats chased fishing boats off the al- Qulaylah coast in al-Rashidiyah and succeeded in sinking the fishing boat "Abu-al-Hasan." The three sailors who were in the boat managed to swim safely to Tyre.

According to reports from the south, four Israeli warplanes and two helicopters flew over Iqlim al-Tuffah last night to cover a troop-landing operation on the summit of al-Jabal al-Rafi'. Shortly afterward, the security service and Islamic Resistance units were placed in a maximum state of alert.

Lebanon: Islamic Resistance Said To Repulse Israeli Advance

NC1902072596 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] As part of its constant readiness to defend our innocent folks in the free villages, the Islamic Resistance last night repulsed an attempt by a Zionist force to advance to Mayfadun via Mazra'at al-Hamra'. The Mujahidin were ready for the infiltrating force when it arrived in the al- Murabba'ah area around 2245, attacking it with rockets and machine guns. A

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clash ensued for around 30 minutes. Following the attack the enemy shelled the area with 155-mm fire. Helicopters were also used to comb the outskirts of Mayfadun, Shukin, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah.

The fire support unit of the Islamic Resistance chased the remnants of the enemy force during their retreat. Several enemy casualties have been confirmed.

At approximately 0030 enemy helicopters resumed their flights over Mayfadun, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah. At midnight the enemy artillery shelled the outskirts of Zibqin with 120-and 155-mm fire from the enemy positions in Tayr Harfa and al- Duhayrah.

Lebanon: SLA Member Killed; Israeli Shelling Reported

NC1902202596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli forces resumed their attacks on defenseless villages and towns in the south today. The Israeli bombardment of Kafr Rumman this evening left Kamilah B'albaki, 45 years old, wounded. She was transferred to al-Najdah hospital in al-Nanatiyah. Meanwhile, more than 70 incendiary shells landed on the town and its suburbs. Two shells hit the Lebanese army center in the town. [passage omitted]

Security reports said that a member of the agent Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army, SLA] was killed and three others were wounded during a clash between Resistance forces and a joint Israeli-SLA patrol between the al-Suwayda' and al-Tuhrah positions overlooking al-Nabatiyah this afternoon.

Lebanon: 'Resistance' Operation Kills Patrol Member, Injures 3

NC2002083796 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the eve of the 'Id, the Islamic Resistance carried out a series of jihad operations against the agent and Zionist occupation forces. They set off explosive devices under an agent militia patrol near al-Jurmuq. The explosion destroyed a vehicle and killed or injured all occupants. Agent sources admitted that one member was killed and three were injured as a result of this operation.

Lebanon: Israeli Shelling, Helicopter Flights Over South Reported

NC2002103596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0900 GMT 20 Feb 96

[Report by correspondent Muhammad Shakkur — live or recorded]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Israeli occupation forces stepped up their attacks on the villages of al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah by shelling and sniping ever since the early hours of this morning, on the first day of the 'Id al-Fitr. [passage omitted]

Since early this morning, the Israeli shelling has targetted the villages of Kafr Rumman, Habbush, al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, the outskirts of Kafr Tibnit, the abandoned army barracks in al- Nabatiyah, the southern district of 'Arab Salim, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, Jarju', Luwayzah, Mlikh, Nab' al-Tasa, al-Jabal al-Rafi', and Mazra'at 'Aqmatah. This shelling was accompanied by extensive machine-gun fire targetting the residential areas of 'Arab Salim, Habbush, Kafr Rumman, and Jarju'. Attacks started at dawn and did not stop all last night on the villages of Kafr Tibnit, Mazra'at al- Hamra', and the outskirts of Yuhmur, Arnun, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah. Similar shelling of a number of villages in Iqlim al-Tuffah also continued. This escalation in shelling was accompanied by extensive Israeli helicopter flights over the Iqlim al-Tuffah heights, all the way to Beaufort Castle and the al-Litani River. Shortly after midnight, these planes strafed the woods of al-Litani, Sujud, and al-Jurmuq, with their heavy machine guns.

We note here that the Israeli shelling of these villages continues. Phosphorous and incendiary shells are being used, as are fragmentation and nail-packed bombs, which are internationally banned.

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Syria: Al-Asad Speaks on Economy, 'Terrorism'

JN1902105496 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0515 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad hosted an iftar banquet at the Damascene Hall in honor of clergymen and religious scholars yesterday. The banquet was attended by Religious Trusts Minister Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid Tarabulsi, Minister of State for Presidential Affairs Wahib Fadil, Chief Mufti Ahmad Kiftaru, Presidency Secretary General Zuhayr Ghazal, assistant religious trusts ministers, muftis, clergymen, religious scholars, and senior Religious Trusts Ministry officials. His excellency the president and the guests performed the sunset prayers and then headed for the iftar table.

His Excellency President Hafiz al-Asad delivered a speech at the iftar banquet he hosted in honor of clergymen and religious scholars. [passage omitted]

His excellency the president commented on domestic affairs, saying: Our domestic state of affairs is good and getting better. If we remember the past state of affairs, we will find that we are pursuing a sound course and that our state of affairs is improving in all areas. Everyone can recall the hardship we once experienced. I am referring exclusively to the economic situation. It should be recalled that our country's population then was less than it is now. In 1970, Syria's population was less than 6 million. Syria's current population is between 15 to 16 million. Nevertheless, we are currently faring better than we did in the past, when our country's population was less than 6 million. This is the result of a concerted effort by all segments of the population. No country can be built unless all segments of the population contribute to it development effort.

His excellency the president added: Agriculture is better than it was in the past. Thanks to all our efforts, Syria has reached what we can call self-sufficiency in agricultural production. In the past, a large part of Syria's revenues was spent on wheat and other cereal imports — that is, on food imports. This year, the production of wheat, barley, chick-peas, lentils, and fruits was good. In the past, we imported more than 85 percent of Syria's fruit needs. In contrast, this year, with a population of 16 million, we have a 300,000-tonne surplus of citrus fruit. Syria cannot consume this large amount, which must be exported. The availability of goods renders prices reasonable and produces a reasonable profit. The state is attempting to spare producers any possible losses. Ultimately, what is important is that production is the country's asset. The same holds true for industry. We have made all these achievements thanks to our hard work and diligence, despite the fact that our country is not big, we do not have stores of wealth, and we do not receive aid from rich countries, as others do.

The president said: Despite the fact that we were in need, in very severe need, in the past, we did not yield or mortgage our will to anybody. At one point, we only had 18 days worth of flour. Now, we have over a full year's reserve of cereals — such as wheat, barley, chick-peas, and lentils. The Syrian citizens helped develop their country and helped it achieve an advanced and good position, compared with the past.

The president discussed the progress achieved in various fields. He said: We have a surplus of university graduates in various specializations. In the past, graduates looked for a career in the government. We tried to create jobs, employ people, and enhance theoretical studies through practical application and practice. For example, agricultural engineers who were previously just sitting in their offices now provide great services all over Syria, fulfilling a great role, and increasing national wealth.

The president added: When we consider how we were and how we are now, we see that we are in a good shape. This has been our goal since 1970 and will continue to be our goal. We have preserved our independence, dignity, and will. We will continue to preserve our dignity and our independence of opinion and prevent any intervention in our domestic affairs. We refuse to let anyone impose his will on us. We do not accept anything that does not serve our national interest.

The president spoke about the attempt by certain foreign quarters to abuse glamorous slogans for their own goals and to extort others, emptying these slogans of any substance. He said: Once these slogans are emptied of their substance, they will be interpreted in exactly the opposite way. We want democracy. They exercise the opposite of democracy, but under the slogan of democracy. We oppose terrorism when it means crime. But when they want to interpret terrorism as meaning that someone cannot defend his occupied territory, then this cannot be the meaning of the word terrorism. We can call the criminal a terrorist, but we cannot consider a citizen who is defending his homeland a terrorist.

The president said: Some people use glamorous slogans, such as democracy, human rights, and liberty, to blackmail and pressure others. Syria cannot be subjugated by the word terrorism or intimidated by accusations of terrorism.

The president said: We are advancing because we seek to achieve a great cause. If we do not keep the great cause before our eyes, we cannot advance.

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The president spoke about the peace process and its recent developments. He said: Syria seeks peace. When the October War of liberation started, I said that we do not wish death to anyone, that we are trying to prevent death, that we are advocates of peace and working to achieve peace for our people and all people of the world, and that we are defending ourselves now in order to live in peace. The meaning of peace is always in our mind. We cannot accept or approve anything that would harm the national interests. Everyone has concluded that it will be impossible to impose anything we reject. When peace is just, then we will be ready for it.

The president said: The peace process has not advanced. We in Syria will continue to support peace. Regardless of how harsh the circumstances may get, there is nothing to equal the independence of our decisionmaking. We seek friendships with all people on the basis of our national interests and rights.

Syria: Iraqi Delegation to Water Talks Departs Via Border Post

JN1702135296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Report by Thana' al-Imam in Damascus]

[FBIS Translated Text] An Iraqi delegation left Damascus today after five days of talks with Syria on measures to confront Turkey's construction of more dams on the Euphrates River. The talks were held within the framework of the Syrian-Iraqi development committee in charge of Tigris and Euphrates water.

Iraqi delegation sources told Radio Monte Carlo that the delegation will depart via the Syrian-Iraqi border post, which has been closed since the early 1980's, when the two countries severed relations. The Iraqi sources added that this is the first time in 15 years an Iraqi delegation has used this border post. The sources, however, said the issue should not be misinterpreted.

Meanwhile, in a statement to Radio Monte Carlo this morning, official Syrian sources denied that the Syrian-Iraqi border post has been reopened. The sources noted that the Iraqi delegation was welcomed in Syria and that coordination between Syria and Iraq on a vital issue, such as water, is necessary.

Syria: Damascus Radio Calls Resumption of Talks 'Another Opportunity'

JN1602144696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: Through Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi Lebanon reiterated that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks go hand in hand. The Lebanese president said peace in the region depends on full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon and implementing UN Resolutions 242, 338, and 425.

It is self-evident that the Syrian and Lebanese tracks go hand in hand. Everyone concerned with the peace process is aware of this. Any progress in talks on the Syrian track must lead to progress on the Lebanese track. Syria made it clear that there can be no agreement with Israel without a Lebanese agreement with Israel. Thus, those concerned with the achievement of peace see no alternative to making more efforts to make the Syrian-Israeli Maryland talks succeed. The talks are scheduled to resume on 28 February.

The United States pledged to do all it can to achieve concrete progress. The EU also pledged the same thing. The European troika delegation, which visited Damascus recently and met with President Hafiz al-Asad, stated a very positive and clear position because peace in the Middle East is more a pressing international need rather than a regional demand. The Syrian track is the key to peace in the region. It is natural, therefore, that international efforts should focus on it. All prominent world politicians who visit Damascus and meet with President al-Asad say Syria is serious about making peace and looks forward to it, but without relinquishing its rights and territory. Israel's commitment to the foundations and principles of the peace process, primarily full withdrawal, will lead to a just and comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict and to a firm and stable peace that can withstand changes and developments.

The resumption of the Maryland talks — in spite of the decision to hold early Israeli elections — is yet another opportunity to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the region. This is especially so because the United States is determined to lend all of its weight to advance the peace process and achieve tangible results.

Some observers say the Israeli elections will be a referendum on peace, especially as the Israeli extremist right has expressed stands that are hostile to the peace process, particularly the Syrian track. This is not the first time the Israeli extremist right has expressed such views. The Shamir government repeatedly said it would not comply with the land-for-peace principle. Shamir himself admitted after the Likud's failure in the previous elections that he planned to destroy the peace talks through a protracted policy of procrastination over so many years. Therefore, the elections are a litmus test: Israel will either pursue the peace process or abandon

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it, causing the collapse of all efforts over the past four years.

As for Syria and Lebanon, peace remains, first and foremost, dependent on full Israeli withdrawal from their occupied territory, regardless of who assumes power in Tel Aviv. There can be no peace outside the framework of the international resolutions, which do not permit the occupation of the territory of others, changing its features, or altering its identity, history, and culture.

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Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Fifteen Pakistani Prisoners Released in Kabul

LD1802193796 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Pashto 1230 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Today, 15 Pakistani prisoners were released in Kabul and handed over to the International Committee of the Red Cross. According to a report by the central news unit, an Afghan Defense Ministry source, confirming the report, said that they were detained in Kabul for various reasons, and have been released by order of President Borhanoddin Rabbani. The source said that some of the prisoners were detained because they were caught in prohibited areas such as the Bagram airbase and the military frontlines. The release of the 15 people by Kabul can be considered a preparation for the renewal of relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan and as a sign of goodwill.

Afghanistan: Taleban Fire 5 Rockets at Kabul Area

LD1902172596 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Last night a mother and her child were martyred as a result of a Taleban rocket attack. Bakhtar told us that last night the hireling Taleban fired five rockets at residential area in Chelsotun. As a result, a mother and her child were martyred and another person was critically wounded. Two residences were also damaged.

India

India: Kashmir Separatists Ready To Rescue Western Hostages

BK1602164596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1135 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SRINAGAR, India, Feb 16 (AFP) — A leading Kashmiri Muslim separatist group repeated a claim Friday [16 February] that Muslim militants were not holding four Westerners hostage in Kashmir and said they were being detained by the Indian army.

A spokesman for Harkat-ul-Ansar, which the Indian authorities believe is behind the kidnapping of the two Britons, an American and a German, also claimed to be ready to mount a "rescue operation" to free the hostages.

Britons Paul Wells and Keith Mangan, American Donald Hutchings and German Dirk Hasert were kidnapped while trekking in the Kashmir Himalayas in early July.

A fifth hostage, Norwegian Hans-Christian Ostro, was slain by the abductors in August.

Their kidnapping has been claimed by a group called Al-Faran but the Indian authorities believe that Al-Faran and Harkat-ul-Ansar are one and the same.

Al-Faran has said on several previous occasions that it was no longer holding the four Westerners and claimed they had been rescued by the Indian army in a December 4 clash.

The Indian authorities have acknowledged killing an Al-Faran commander in a December 4 gunbattle in Kashmir but said the hostages were not present at the time. They have repeatedly dismissed Al-Faran's claims to no longer be holding the hostages and insist they are still with the group.

Al-Faran broke off communications with the Indian authorities on November 26 but Indian officials have said they believe the hostages are still alive.

The Harkat-ul-Ansar spokesman told the Urdu-language daily Uqaab in an interview published in Friday's editions that Al-Faran was a creation of "Indian intelligence agencies."

The Harkat spokesman also said the group is "ready to help the three countries involved in all possible ways to seek the release of the four guests."

A Muslim separatist drive in Kashmir, India's only Muslim- majority state, has left more than 12,000 people dead since 1989.

India: Suspected Nagaland Extremists Kill 6 Army Personnel

BK2002110496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Nagaland, six army personnel were killed and five injured, one of them seriously, when suspected underground extremists ambushed a convoy of the Rashtriya Rifles yesterday. According to UNI [United News of India], the incident took place at Wokha, about 74 km from Kohima. Official sources said today that the members of the army were traveling in the Rashtriya Rifles vehicle from Sune Boto to Wokha when they were attacked. The firing lasted about an hour. A massive combing operation has been jointly launched by Assam Rifles and CRPF [Central Reserve Police Force]. Police have yet to ascertain which of the two NSCN [National Socialist Council of Nagaland] factions was responsible for the ambush.

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India: Commentary Accuses Pakistan of Interfering in Afghanistan

BK1702121596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Commentary by A.K. Sinha]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The UN Security Council has called for immediate halt to infighting in Afghanistan and also warned the foreign powers to refrain from interfering in the internal affairs of that country. There are three major factions fighting one another for full control over Afghanistan. They are Tajik Rabbani- Ahmad Mas'ud faction, Uzbek Rashid Dostam faction, and Pakistan- backed Taleban militia. Golboddin Hekmatyar's Heb-e-Eslami, once a very powerful faction, has been keeping low.

Actually, the continued conflict in Afghanistan provides a fertile ground for terrorism, arms transfers and trafficking which affects the whole region and beyond. Several Afghan mercenaries have been arrested in Jammu and Kashmir. The continued civil war has also claimed thousands of lives and caused a widespread loss of property. It is not the first time that the UN Security Council has called for a halt to infighting and outside interference in Afghan affairs. On Wednesday [14 February], the UN secretary general, Dr. Butrus-Ghali, had drawn the attention of Pakistan's foreign minister, Sardar Asif Ali, toward the council's demand.

Those who are closely watching the Afghan situation will not be surprised at Pakistan's interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. Pakistan is known to be actively supporting Taleban militia which wants to oust President Borhanoddin Rabbani government. They have turned down all offers of Rabbani government for talks. Although Pakistan denies any help to Taleban militia but the facts say a different story. Taleban, who claim themselves Madrasah [Islamic religious school]-trained students of theology, are actually a wing of the Pakistan Army. They have been raised, trained and armed by Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence. Madrasahs nowhere in the world teach the students how to launch rockets, fire mortars and fly combat planes. But in Afghanistan, they are attacking well-trained forces of President Rabbani.

Actually rulers in Islamabad have been pursuing the policy of expanding the area of its influence in Afghanistan since the 1980's when Afghans were fighting against Soviet occupation. After the fall of the Najib government in Kabul, Islamabad vigorously helped Hekmatyar faction to capture capital Kabul. When this move did not succeed, it raised Taleban militia. The question is asked: Will Pakistan succeed in subjugating the freedom-loving people of Afghanistan? History has shown no outside power has been able to keep control of that country. Afghans have mauled the Britishers in the past and in recent years driven out Soviet forces and there is no doubt that Pakistan will meet the same fate.

Iran

Iran: Nateq-Nuri Addresses Jerusalem Day Rally

LD1602155196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0645 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Address by Iranian Majles Speaker 'Ali Akbar Nateq-Nuri at the ceremonial proceedings for Jerusalem Day in Tehran — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. Thank you for your support. [passage omitted] Today, I am going to explain why we are marking the last Friday of the month of Ramadan as Jerusalem Day. Why did our great Imam [Ruhollah Khomeyni] name the day as Jerusalem Day? Some Westerners, the Western mass media, might criticize us by raising the following question: "Why should you play with the people's emotions by organizing a rally under the guise of Jerusalem Day? The fact that you stir and provoke the people's emotions prevents establishment of peace in the Middle East. Well, 50 years ago something happened. Let us suppose a crime was committed, too. Should you revive the memory of a crime that was committed 50 years ago? Now let us resolve the issue, let us make peace? Why are you stirring troubles?"

In reply to the above question, I have two or three answers as to why we mark the occasion. First, it is not us marking the occasion, it is God. We are duty bound by God to mark the occasion. This is a religious mission and a burden of responsibility our faith has bestowed upon us. This is a duty that must be observed in accordance with the shari'ah. This is not just a political mission. We have been ordered by the Lord of the Believers Imam Ali, peace be upon him [the first Shi'i imam] to mark the occasion. Imam Ali in his book of Nahj al-Balaghah tells us: "You, as Muslims, are duty bound to defend the oppressed any time in history. You must stand against tyrants. This is a religious edict." [passage omitted]

Imam Ali, in his will and testament, says: You, my children, must always oppose tyrants. You must always remain enemies of oppressors and aggressors, and you must always support the oppressed. This is one of the instructions left to us by Ali.

Now today on this earth, can you find any people more oppressed than the Palestinians? These people

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have given thousands of martyrs. Their houses were usurped and their assets plundered. Their women were raped. Their loved ones were buried alive in mass graves. They were victims of various crimes. Their land was occupied. They were forced to flee their homes. Millions of Palestinian Muslims became homeless. Is there any one more oppressed than the Palestinians? If you, therefore, wish to execute Imam Ali's will and testament, you can defend the Palestinians. Of course, we are duty bound to defend any oppressed person. This is the will of Ali and the Koran and Islam. This is a duty.

We used to defend the Bosnian Muslims for the same reason. We are defending the Muslims of Kashmir for this same reason. We are saddened by the massacre, unfortunately fratricide, in Afghanistan because of the reason we mention here. That is why we defend the people of Lebanon. We shall defend any aggrieved person for this same reason. And we are not going to compromise with bullies for this same reason. We are the Shi'is of Imam Ali. We shall not compromise with tyrants and oppressors. If one was supposed to compromise with tyrants, Ali would have done so. This is our belief. [passage omitted]

How can a person call himself a Muslim and yet agree to compromise over the Palestine issue? How can a Muslim ignore the crimes committed by the Zionist and Israel? Can such a person claim to possess Islamic zeal? Can he claim to support humanity?

Imam Ali says: "When a Muslim man hears the news that Muslim women have been victims of a crime, their earrings ripped off and stolen, their necklaces ripped off and taken away, when a Muslim hears such news, he can die of sorrow. If such a man dies of sorrow, one should not blame him. This is a sorrow worth dying for." We are the followers of Ali. He has said that one would be justified to die in such circumstances. It would be better to die, to be swallowed by the earth, so as to avoid witnessing these crimes. This was one of our missions.

We have named a day as Jerusalem Day, and we honor it because this is our religious duty. We consider it a religious duty to defend the Palestinians. We consider it a religious duty to fight against Zionism and Israel. We believe intifada is an undisputed right of the Palestinian people. The people of Palestine have risen to recover their rights, and we defend justice. The people wish to return to their homes, and we defend helpless people. The United States knows this and should be reminded again that we shall support and defend the Islamic resistance, because they seek justice, because they plan to kick out the oppressor and return to their own homes.

The second reason for us that makes keeping Jerusalem alive a must is that we must tell the Western media: to those who say that something happened 50 years ago, let it go; let's somehow sort out the peace and bring in peace and end the issue. To them we say that the conspiracy goes deeper than that. We must keep Jerusalem Day. Let us explain that conspiracy, which is continuing, to the world of Islam, Muslims, and the world. Let's tell them that the issue of the conspiracy of 50 years ago and the occupation of the Muslim nation's land and the occupation of Palestine is not a 50-year-old incident that has ended; it is a conspiracy against Islam and the world of Islam. And that conspiracy still continues. That was the beginning.

Today that conspiracy has taken on a new form. It is not just the taking of Palestine and its occupation. That was the beginning of it. By the hand of the old imperialism, Britain, that conspiracy took shape at that time, and by the hand of the British mercenaries of Britain in the land of Palestine, beside the Jordan River, that conspiracy materialized. They gathered the Zionists and the Zionist Jews from here and there, disarmed the Muslims, and put arms at the disposal of the Jews there. They attacked and plundered and set up a mercenary regime there and made up Israel in the occupied land. That was the center of the trouble and the beginning of the trouble. Not its end, but its beginning.

The Zionist, after all, will not be content with that place. You saw that later, whenever anything happened, they took somewhere. They kept expanding. They set up a regime that is racist, anti-human, terrorist, aggressive, extremist. The Zionists nurture in their heads the idea of a rule from the Nile to the Euphrates. They won't be content with that place only.

It is the callowness, naivety, and ingenuousness of a group of people and rulers in the region who think that the Palestine issue has ended; let's make peace and wrap up the matter.

Today, Israel, backed by America, is continuing its expansionist policies. Unfortunately, today when any Islamic country smiles at Israel, Israel grabs it, saying: Let's sign an oil agreement, let's sign an economic agreement.

Let me say this here: unfortunately, some Arab countries are committing the same treachery their forefathers committed during the formation of the Palestine-occupying regime. Some Arab countries are paving the way for Israel so that the Israelis, the Zionists, dominate the oil-rich region, the center of capital of Islamic countries, of the Persian Gulf. This is a very dangerous plot. This is a great treachery being committed by certain leaders of Islamic countries. They are preparing the ground so that Israel dominates the Persian Gulf, the economic center of Islamic countries, so that it comes

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to the scene as the gendarme of America in the region. This is a new threat.

They have tricked Arab countries with the excuse of peace. Jerusalem Day came about to expose these plots, so that the dimensions of these plots are exposed, so that it becomes clear what they are after: the interests and resources of Islamic countries. This is what they are working toward.

And they have peace talks. What peace? Peace with whom? Peace for what? For which aim? Is this peace? You [Israel] throw out the owners of the house and then you sit with those who don't own the house to carve up your interests. The wandering, refugee Palestinians remain refugees. And the Palestinians who remain in the territories continue to be dominated, face torture and murder, and become martyrs. Is this peace? Is this what you call peace in this world? [passage omitted]

As far as I am concerned, there is no treachery worse than having certain leaders of certain Arab countries, certain leaders of certain Arab groups, giving legitimacy to the Zionist regime. This is a betrayal of Palestine, the Palestinians, and Beyt ol-Moqaddas [Jerusalem], the first qiblah [direction of prayers] of the Muslims. This is the greatest betrayal, the biggest historical mistake you are making. [crowd chants in support: "God is great!" "Khamene'i is the leader!" "Death to America: Death to Israel"]

Holding negotiations with Israel is giving legitimacy to Israel, and this is religiously forbidden [haram], this is betraying the Palestinians.

This is dealing over the heads of Palestinians, this is an American and arrogant plot. Negotiations with Israel, recognizing its legitimacy, its legality, is a betrayal of Palestine, a betrayal of Beyt ol-Moqaddas. Aren't they the same people who two years' in Ramadan massacred the fasting Muslims during the morning prayers in Khalil [Hebron], in the Khalil mosque? If they get the opportunity, they won't let one Muslim remain there. Peace negotiations!

Mr. Clinton wants to increase his chances of winning the elections, he wants to solve his own problems in America, he wants to tell Americans: I had the ability to solve the Palestinian problem, I did this, I did that. He wants to attract votes, he is after his own interests, don't be fooled by him! They don't want to come into the region to establish peace. Do you want tranquillity here? Just leave, what is it to you to come here from the other side of the world? Do you support humanity? [passage omitted]

My third point is this: When we mark and celebrate Jerusalem Day, it is because we want to carry out our duty and pay greater attention to this issue. Let the Muslims know that the Palestinian issue cannot be separated from the rest of Muslims. This is a plot against Islam, a plot against the Muslims. They want to create a strong base against Islam and the Muslims in order to extend their expansionism and racism. Muslims should be awake and alert. Thanks be to God, the children of Palestine, the youth of Palestine, are awake. This generation that is fighting there today was raised under the tent, they grew up as refugees, they were born under difficult conditions and raised with harshness, and today they are defending their honor; they are fighting with stones, it is a war of stones.

And the people of Palestine should know that God's promise will surely come true. When a people rises for the sake of God, it will be victorious. The enemy will come to its knees, sooner or later. Israel isn't more awesome than the Shah; it has the same supporters: America and other arrogant powers. This people remained steadfast and with empty hands, they were successful, they threw out this gendarme of the region with his tail between his legs and established Islamic rule. Today, this country has become the focal point of the oppressed of the world.

You [Palestinians] must continue on your path with hope, heads held high and full of confidence. In the end, this movement will lead to your victory and the defeat of your enemies.

Let me say a few words to the so-called defenders of human rights, to the United Nations: What are you saying? What have you left to say in this world? Under the guise of defending human rights and freedom, you defend an apostate [Salman Rushdie], an apostate, an evil, corrupt person who has violated the honor of divine prophets, the honor of the great prophet of Islam, Muhammad Bin Mustafa. [crowd chants: "God's peace and benedictions be upon him and his scion"] You defend an apostate who has hurt the hearts of more than 1 billion Muslims. Are you deaf, dumb, and blind to the crimes the Israelis commit, whether inside the occupied territories or outside? Do you have any vestiges of honor or prestige left in the world or among the people of the world? Do you have the face to say we are defenders of human rights, with these multi-standards of yours?

And when it comes to us, you become real defenders of human rights, the defenders of the oppressed. And when Iranian officials confront someone who is a criminal, who has a record, and who has been convicted, you write to us shouting: Hey! A human being has been detained! Help! Human rights are being violated! We are talking about someone who has a record, who has committed crimes and who has been convicted

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according to our laws. When we confront that person, you start shouting and screaming. Don't you see what crimes are being committed against the Muslims in Lebanon and Palestine?

This is what I believe, and I have said this in all my trips, including my recent one to Austria. I told their officials, the esteemed speaker of their parliament, who is a very honorable man, and I believe he is honest, I told them openly: I speak openly, not as diplomatic protocol dictates, and I say that human rights, terrorism, Salman Rushdie, nuclear and conventional weapons, all these allegations you make against us are political games. You don't care about human beings, you don't care about human rights or anything. These are all games, you want to put pressure on us because we stick to our values. If this is not the case, how can Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is in Europe, become a source of disgrace to the Europeans and the Westerners. What did you do about all the crimes there? And now you defend about Salman Rushdie? Isn't this just a game? Isn't this double standards?

Israel has nuclear warheads, it will not join any treaty or listen to anyone; this is not dangerous. But when Iran is after nuclear energy, this becomes dangerous. Our country's door is open to all international agencies, and they have come from everywhere and visited us. We are members of various treaties, we support the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, we support the elimination of nuclear weapons, our door is open, and you have seen for yourself. But when you meet us, after a hundred times, in the hundred and first meeting you say: We are extremely concerned, Iran is seeking nuclear weapons.

Shame on you! We are a threat but Israel is not dangerous! We, who more than anyone else have been the victims of terrorism, are supposed to support terrorism. [passage omitted] The same terrorists are now in America, in Europe; you have given them refuge there. Now are we supporters of terrorism or you? We have questions to ask the European Union, the Europeans. We should not answer questions, we are the ones who have questions to ask. [passage omitted]

Let me say this forthrightly and decisively: We reject and shall dismiss anyone who recognizes the illegal, usurper, racist Israeli regime. This is what we shall do. [crowd chants in support] We think the dimensions of the Zionist plot go far beyond the confines of occupied Palestine. We call on all Muslims to be aware and not accept oppression or the oppressor and to defend the oppressed. The Zionist propaganda machine, the pressure put on us by America, are all because of the justice-seeking stance of Iran regarding the Palestinian issue. We say here openly: We support their Islamic struggle until they achieve their rights. [passage omitted]

Iran: Jerusalem Day Statement Read at Rally

LD1602212096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0745 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Resolution by marchers at the Jerusalem Day rally in Tehran; read by unidentified speaker — live]

[FBIS Translated Text] Greetings to his excellency, Ruhollah [Khomeyni], the imam of freemen, the vanguard of the dawn of Islamic revolution, the man whose divine clamor revealed the ugly nature of world arrogance, led by the criminal United States and its illegitimate child the usurping Israel, and the man who put the enemies of Islam, humanity, and freedom to shame. And greetings to his excellency, the Grand Ayatollah Khamene'i, the great flag bearer of the Koran, the wise sage and the great leader of Islamic revolution. [crowd chants: "God is great"]

A glance at the short history of days gone by reveals how the Zionist tyrants, with the generous support of the great Satan, have soaked their polluted hands and arms in the blood of the brave children of Palestine, and have enjoyed the coordination and cooperation of some so-called Muslim governments in their criminal acts.

But the blood of no innocent individual will be wasted, and sooner or later the oppressors and the unjust will be rewarded the wages of their shameful acts. Today, the revengeful cries of the fallen martyrs of the honorable land of Palestine, from Dayr Yasin to Kafr Qasim, and from Sabra to Shatila, are being heard, and the unjustly spilled blood of the martyrs in the path of Koran, be they innocent Palestinian children who were the target of the bullets of the Israeli executioners or the youths who fell in their own blood on the paving stones of the allies, is going to destroy the weak foundations of the Zionist tyrants.

Many brave and honorable commanders such as Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi, Shaykh Raghib Harb, Sayyid 'Abbas al-Musawi, Yahya Ayyash, and other chivalrous combatants have been martyred by the occupying terrorists and the dishonest supporters of human rights, but the courageous Palestinian nation and the confident Islamic community deeply believe that the government and monarchy of the Rabin-slaying God stands forever and that the oppressive usurpers and their supporters are doomed to ruin and destruction. This is the promise by God which is true, and this Koranic verse is a remedy for the wounded hearts of the lovers of Qods [Jerusalem]:

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And soon will the unjust assailants know what vicissitudes their affairs will take.

Now that once again the final days of the auspicious month of Ramadan, the month in which the Koran was revealed, and world Jerusalem Day have arrived and the clenched fists of the Islamic ummah are targeting the rotten face of the usurper Zionist regime, the fasting and heroic people of Islamic Iran, at the end of their glorious and nationwide rally, in order to declare their all- encompassing support for the Muslim and suffering people of Palestine and in order to renew their allegiance to the holy aspirations of the late imam — may God sanctify his pure spirit — and the great leader of the Islamic revolution [Khamene'i], announce with the loud roar of God is great:

1. Inspired by the lofty thoughts and aspirations of our late imam, may he be admitted to God's paradise, and announcing our all- encompassing support for the guidelines of the source [of emulation] of the Shiite world, the guardian of the cause [vali-ye amr] of the Muslims of the globe, the brave leader of the Islamic revolution, and the great leader on the need to confront and struggle against global arrogance, headed by the criminal America, and on the need to continue the struggle until the destruction of the Zionist regime and the Israeli criminals: We announce that we regard standing up to the bullying of the tyrant America and the aggression of the usurper Israel as one of our most important duties. We shall not rest until the complete liberation of the land of Palestine and noble Qods. [crowd chants: "God is great"]

Those who approve of the resolution should shout God is great and Khamene'i is the leader once.

2. We marchers believe that the criminal America, the mother of all corruption in the century, is the center for all plots and designs against the Islamic community, and we condemn American acts against humanity and the Islamic community, especially the heroic people of the occupied Palestine, and we condemn the unwise actions of the American regime in allocating a budget against the popular order of the Islamic Republic. We also firmly believe in the words of the imam of the ummah that the United States cannot do a damn thing, and we shall continue our comprehensive support for the proud order of the Islamic Republic and its firm leadership, and we are prepared to stand face to face against that arrogant regime and all the designs of the mother of all corruption in the century. [crowd chants support]

3. We fasters who are participating in this great event condemn the violation against the human rights of the innocent Palestinian people in the occupied territories and condemn the violations against holy sites in the land of revelation by the mercenaries of the Zionist regime. We believe that the shameful silence of international organizations — which claim to support human rights and whose act only amounts to cooperation with and participation in the crimes of the criminal tyrants — has stained the record of the above organizations, and we call on the world's freedom-seeking establishments, as well as Islamic countries, to investigate and stand up to the methods used by the above organizations, and we firmly condemn the explicit and implicit support extended by the organizations claiming to support human rights for the occupying criminals. [crowd chants support]

4. We marchers praise the selflessness and the self-sacrifices of the brave children of the Islamic community, especially the martyrs on the path of freedom for Palestine, and we support the proud intifadah and the brave movement of Islamic resistance as the only path for the liberation of Palestine, and we call on the world Muslims to stand up and fight until there is the total destruction and overthrow of the regime occupying Qods. We also call on them to mobilize all the material and spiritual resources of the Islamic nations for this sacred movement, and we stress the need for the unity of Islamic countries and the martyrdom-seeking struggles of the Muslim youth in support for the combatants of intifadah.

5. We, the Muslim nation of Iran, condemn any form of conciliation or talks with the Zionist regime, and we reject any agreement as creditless, and we blame the dishonorable and compromising leaders of Palestine and some Arab countries for compromising and establishing relations with the regime occupying Qods and thus violating the honor of the struggle and the blood of the innocent martyrs. We also stress that the right of determining the destiny of the struggling Palestinian nation, as with other nations, lies in the hands of the nation itself, and organizations affiliated to world arrogance and their mercenaries have no right in determining the destiny of the innocent nation of Palestine. [crowd chants support]

6. We declare this truth, that terrorism, rape, and murder are fundamental elements in the ideology and sociopolitical life of the occupiers of Qods and their supporters, and we declare that the world arrogance believes the continuity of its existence to lie in aggression against other nations, especially Muslim nations and in merciless massacre of people across the world. We thus stress that reestablishing greatness and achieving freedom and independence can only come in the total return to the holy Koran, the revival of Koranic values, and the implementation of Koranic laws in society, and we declare

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that the Islamic nation of Iran — until the full implementation of Islamic values, the establishment of the rights of the Islamic community, an end to aggression against Islamic lands and the liberation of the honorable Qods — will submit and have unquestionable obedience to the great leader of the Islamic revolution, and will continue the holy war to the brink of martyrdom. [crowd chants support]

God's blessing and peace upon you.

Iran: Rafsanjani Delivers Sermon on 'Palestine' Issue

LD1602202496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0808 GMT 16 Feb 96

[First Friday sermon by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

Today, you rightly expect me to devote at least one of my sermons to the issue of Palestine. For this reason, I will not carry on with my series of debates on the Koran, and I will speak about Palestine in the first sermon. In my second sermon, I will debate some of the issues of the day. [passage omitted]

On the issue of Palestine, what is clear is that this is an issue for the whole world today, and not just for us. Muslims and non-Muslims, the Jews, the Christians, Arabic countries, European and American states and the East and West, they are all involved in the issue, as it is probably the most crucial issue for the world of today. This has been so for many decades now. [passage omitted]

We are now facing a new development, which is very dangerous, and people should be fully informed about it. In my opinion, besides rhetorical issues — necessary as they may be — one needs in-depth analysis in order to keep people informed. Fortunately, our people are well aware, and right now, when I was coming to Tehran University, I saw that people were still pouring into the streets and coming toward the university campus. This shows that the people have sensed the importance of the issue, and are serious about it. [passage omitted]

In its present dimension, we see that the issue of peace has now been brought forward, and the same people whose fathers — or even themselves — had been deceived and tricked in the past, and the very same people who repented, wept or even committed suicide when they realized that they had been tricked are now once again being deceived by America. In the past, it was England, now it is America. Of course, they were both moving in tandem. It is strange to see how far this great deception is going this time. It has developed to such an extent that even faraway countries, which have nothing to do with the region, have started a race to officially recognize Israel.

America is imposing its full weight upon the region and is using all its means and levers. This is to such an extent that one sees that even certain revolutionary countries and groups are giving in to the compromise process. They of course think that they will win and the whole affair will come to an end. They are however mistaken. It is absolutely impossible that the Palestinian issue will come to an end this way.

It was not so long ago that the state of Israel was formed in 1947 [date as heard]. Say around 50 years. The Crusaders were there for nearly 200 years and were eventually kicked out. The Muslims of today are no less capable than the Muslims of the Salah al-Din Ayubi era [during wars with Crusaders].

It is certain that the Islamic movement of today will prove more powerful [than the past]. In those days, there was no Islamic Republic of Iran. Today, you have a country of 60 million people like Iran right behind you; that is a country with all its resources and with the greatness of its revolution and the amazing revolutionary spirit of its people, who are unique in the history.

If the youth and the ordinary people in the Arab world are quiet today, it is probable that when the right international conditions appear, they might start a movement in the region. Israel's way of thinking is wrong. Of course what is a very bitter reality for me at the moment is that the Arabs think this peace will succeed and the wars will come to an end. It is very simplistic to think that under the present conditions, Israel will accept the presence of an independent Palestinian state in a neighborhood so close that the heart and center of Israel can be targeted with even long-range artillery. This is very simplistic indeed.

Of course, at present the Israelis have no other choice but to speak in these terms. This is a stage which they have to pass. Their way of thinking is that they should pass this stage, break the serious boycott and embargo which has been imposed on them and soothe people's emotions and sentiments, so that normal conditions can be restored. They think that the day will eventually come for them to take their next step toward the Euphrates and other regions.

On the other side of the spectrum, the problems of the Arabs and the Muslims still remain unresolved. If a

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certain government puts its signature to a certain treaty, this does not mean that the people too have accepted the treaty. Even if some of them accept it, a substantial majority will oppose it with zeal. Eventually, this will come to the surface again, and people will start thinking about it.

Neither side accepts the present situation. How can one ignore the fate of four million Palestinian refugees? [passage omitted]

They are humans and have feelings. They are angry with Israel and the signatories of treaties, from the very depth of their hearts. It seems that the moves in progress at the moment will lead to the intensification of the sense of hatred and grudge on both sides. In Israel itself, the extremists and the bad-tempered ['asabi-mezaj] individuals, say in the Likud party — an example of whom was the young man who killed their prime minister — do not accept the peace. The other side also rejects peace.

So, as I said, we are facing new conditions. The flames of the fire will rise again. The first move might be initiated by Israel in the shape of continuation of its aggression, while it is also possible that the Arabs and the Muslims may start a move with the aim of returning to their homeland. There will be a movement, however, which will be followed by others.

America is making a mistake and is really committing an injustice in the region. It is merely killing people and deepening the existing sedition [fetneh]. If they really have good intentions, now that they have calmed things down, they should sit down and resolve the refugee problem, the issue of Israel itself, and the problem of Jews who have come there without any justification. They should take a logical step so that those Jews, Christians, and Muslims who have a right to remain there, may live together in Palestine. If they follow this move — which also forms the basis of our way of thinking — then calm and tranquillity can be restored in the region. It is not the case that what the Arabs call a racist [unsori] regime, the Europeans call a nationalist state and we call a racist regime, should necessarily be present in the region and create seditions in the region.

What is certain is that this move by America will not serve the region, and the Arab and Muslim masses will not be convinced. It is certain that the weak Arab governments will not succeed in convincing their nations. There is no doubt whatsoever that the Muslims of other countries, such as Iran, will not give up their Islamic rights. [crowd chants in support]

Iran: Protesters Burn Ataturk Effigy With U.S.-Colored Hat

TA1602200596 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 1800 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] A group of Iranians demonstrated against Turkey in front of the Turkish Embassy in Tehran. A group of approximately 50 persons gathered in front of the embassy this afternoon and first burned an effigy. According to an ANATOLIA AGENCY report, the effigy bore pictures of Ataturk in both the front and back and wore a hat depicting the colors of the U.S. flag. The Tehran police adopted security measures during the demonstration. The demonstrators also chanted slogans against Turkey and wrote graffiti on the walls of the embassy.

Iran: CIA Report on 'Instability' in Turkey, Elsewhere Discussed

NC1902145396 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 12 Feb 96 p 16

[Commentary by Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh: "The CIA and the Plot To Dismember Countries".]

[FBIS Translated Text] Early this week U.S. Vice President Al Gore revealed a report by the CIA claiming that several countries are on the verge of dismemberment. The CIA's new list includes regional powers such as India, some of America's regional friends, and even some small countries in Africa.

Based on experience, any power that has sought to dominate a region or the world has always used dismemberment to weaken its rival countries. The nineties [as published] were full of international political developments that upset the international order and created chaos, which Washington considered a ray of hope for its opportunistic efforts.

Throughout the Cold War, America's efforts to indirectly prevent the unity of the two Germanies failed. Now Germany has emerged as the biggest European power and the vanguard of the process of decreasing dependence and reducing complete harmony with America. But the dismemberment of the Soviet Union was America's biggest victory after the Cold War. Now, among the 15 dismembered states of the former Soviet Union, even Russia is not safe from American influence. Now, looking at growing nationalist movements and the former communists in the republics who stayed after the downfall of the Soviet empire, Washington has concentrated on strengthening the reformists and the supporters of independence. Future dismemberment efforts in the

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mother country—Russia—will be supported by America.

In Southeast Asia America's policy concentrates on ways to prevent a potential rival from emerging. Despite any facade, the Americans oppose the process to unite the two Koreas. Now, South Korea—after Japan—sees the largest number of Pentagon forces deployed on its territory. This military alertness on the border makes the outlook for a united Korea difficult.

The CIA's current list includes India. It has always adopted a neutral stance in international equations. It has made military purchases from the East and West and has also based its economy and trade on the same formula. But India's rapprochement with China and Russia during the past few years and its limited disputes with Pakistan—one of America's regional friends—as well as rumors about New Delhi's efforts to carry out its second nuclear test have all concerned Washington. Rumors of dismemberment are America's new policy for inflicting psychological pressure on the Indian Government and people. This policy conveys the message that Washington is sensitive to India's efforts to affect the international balance and that the CIA might enter the scene to safeguard Washington's national security and interests. Dismemberment might be referred to as one of India's Achilles' heels.

The CIA's latest list includes yet another ploy. The list includes countries like Pakistan, Turkey, and Haiti, which have governments that might be considered Washington's regional allies. U.S. bases are still operating in Turkey. Incirlik base in Turkey is the platform for the Pentagon's operations command in the Middle East. In Haiti, the White House has interfered such that it has lost international prestige to return the pro-U.S. government to power. And ... [ellipsis as published]

Political circles believe that yet another aspect of the CIA's ploy is that it wants to use allegations of instability in the various countries as a pretext for its continuing presence and intervention. A good example of this can be seen in Turkey. In recent months representatives of the two major parties—the Welfare Party and the Motherland Party—have joined in unison with the people in opposing the continuing presence of Incirlik base.

The argument used by the opponents of Ciller's government is that at a time when no state of emergency exists in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf, the presence of the rapid deployment forces only creates problems for Turkey. But the Pentagon implies that, in addition to considering it its mission to preserve regional stability, it wants to portray itself as the basis and source of stability in friendly countries! This new special task calls for new pretexts.

Iran: 'Terrorist' Center Excuse for U.S. To Renege on Pledges

LD1702124596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1050 GMT 17 Feb 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under circumstances in which the international peace mediators in Bosnia are undertaking a joint policy in order to establish peace and security in the crisis-ridden Balkans region, fresh tension has surfaced recently between the belligerent parties and the multinational NATO force.

This development shows that the peace agreement still has fundamental and complex problems and, despite the apparently continuing efforts of the peace planners, these obstacles continue to remain in place.

Following the recent failure of the diplomatic efforts of [U.S. Secretary of State Warren] Christopher and [Assistant Secretary of State Richard] Holbrooke, the American envoys to the region, in implementing the Dayton agreement, the tension that surfaced between American officials and the Bosnian Government is one of the critical and political bottlenecks which has brought the crisis to a new stage.

Certain incidents indicate that Washington, which has the largest number of peacekeepers in the NATO force, following an analysis of the current conditions, has decided to reevaluate the agreements reached and has decided to take part in the training and supply of the Bosnian police force.

U.S. efforts designed to exaggerate the climate of mistrust toward the parties involved in the conflict in the region have now undermined many of their efforts towards peace, to the extent that the U.S. State Department, which recently announced the discovery of a military center in Bosnia which the Americans have portrayed as a Bosnian Government terrorist training center, is trying to find a better excuse to justify its role and action in bringing peace to the region.

The multinational NATO force has announced that the training center is located 40 km west of Sarajevo which, according to their claim, was a center for coordinating terrorist activities against the multinational NATO force in the region. However, the Bosnian Government, rejecting this allegation, has announced that the center was a just a center for the training of special units of the army for the search and arrest of war criminals. It

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says it has not planned or implemented any program in violation of the region's peace agreement.

It is obvious that the surfacing of differences of view between NATO officials and the belligerent parties not only threatens developments toward peace in the region, it also shows the lack of a strong will on the part of the multinational peace force for the establishment of a lasting peace in the region. This means such incidents, irrespective of the details of the case, will never justify the negligence of the NATO force, which has been there for 60 days now.

On the other hand, it seems that the recent pressure by the U.S. State Department on the Bosnian Government, which coincides with a summit meeting in Rome to include the representatives of the parties involved in the war with the aim of assessing the advances in the peace process, is an extra pressure by the White House against the Muslim Bosnian Government designed to allow the White House to go back on the pledges it made to the Bosnian Government, and at the same time, to gain a number of concessions from this country, thereby presenting a positive record of U.S. foreign policy on the eve of the presidential election in that country.

Iran: Velayati Announces Legal Procedures Initiated Against U.S.

LD1802114096 Tehran IRNA in English 0652 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — Legal proceedings have been initiated against the U.S. to defuse Washington's plots against Iran, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati announced Sunday [18 February] in an interview with the English morning daily 'IRAN NEWS'.

Referring to the dlrs. 20 million budget approved by the U.S. Congress for covert operations against the Islamic republic, he said such actions were contrary to the U.N. Charter and international trade laws.

"Moreover, based on the contents of the Algiers Accord signed by Iran and the U.S., Washington committed itself to avoid any interference in the domestic affairs of this country and to refrain from any actions against the Islamic republic," he underscored.

Saying that Zionist lobbies are the most decisive factor in the formulation of American policies towards Tehran, he said it was surprising for a supposedly powerful country as the U.S. to surrender its foreign policy or priorities in a strategic region as the Middle East, to a small minority even at the cost of American national interest.

Stressing Washington's isolation in pursuing these hostile policies, the foreign minister stressed, "the U.S. breached international law but did not succeed in attracting the attention of Europe."

The European Union in its recent meeting opposed Washington's machinations against Tehran, he added, emphasizing that Tehran's relations with European countries were not limited to merely paying lip-service but based on mutual interest.

Commenting on a report that Japan is hesitant to fulfill certain financial arrangements made with Iran, Velayati clarified the issue by saying, "We do not have loan and credit problems, and any postponement or stoppage of an installment of a loan from Japan will not exert any pressure on us."

He stressed that it was not in Tokyo's interest to buckle under American pressure, pointing out that as an industrial giant, Japan intends to be present in and to have relations with Iran and other important countries in the region.

Talking of Tehran's relations with other regional countries, Velayati said the Islamic republic follows a firm policy of good relations with and non-interference in the internal affairs of its neighbors.

He admitted that Irano-Saudi ties have improved recently, while declining to comment on recent changes in the Riyadh government, as he said, "This is an internal matter for the Saudis."

On the outcome of his recent visit to Kuwait, he reported, "The Kuwaiti foreign minister raised the issue of the three Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf," adding that Kuwait wants to help Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) settle the dispute over the islands amicably.

As to relations with India and Pakistan, the foreign minister underlined that Iran has good ties with both countries but these friendly relations are by no means to the detriment of bilateral links with other states.

Recalling that President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani has remarked that the planned gas pipeline from Iran to India via Pakistan is to be a "pipeline of peace", Velayati concluded by saying, "If we have normal relations with both India and Pakistan, then we would be able to play an effective role in reducing tension between the two countries."

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Iran: U.S. Efforts To Expel Non-Native Muslims From Bosnia Viewed

LD1802145996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1053 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The action by the multi-national NATO forces in finding a training center for the Bosnian Special Police in the center of that country — which ended with the arrest of several Bosnian military people and several foreign nationals — was relatively widely reflected by the world media. The 11 people who were arrested by the NATO forces at the Bosnian police training center were released after a sharp reaction by Bosnian authorities. The Bosnian Interior Ministry, in a statement last night, strongly condemned the attack by NATO on the Bosnian police units near Sarajevo and described it as violating Bosnian laws. The Bosnian Foreign Ministry statement says: The NATO multi-national forces embarked on the attack on the training center without the knowledge of the Bosnian authorities.

According to documented evidence released by the Bosnian Government, the training center was founded for the purpose of military training of Bosnian military personnel and improving the military capabilities of the army special units as well as the identification and arrest of war aggressors. The propaganda clamor by the NATO forces — led by America, which accused the Bosnian Government of carrying out terrorist operations against the multi- national peace forces in the area — and the following arrest of several military people, not only violate the sovereignty of the Bosnian Government within the legal and political framework of that country, but also confirm yet another effort by America to give the impression of having black documents in its possession concerning the involved parties in Bosnia and their lack of cooperation with the NATO forces. The United States, which provides one third of the 60,000 strong NATO forces in the area, is still trying to put the responsibility of the failure of the NATO peacekeeping forces in consolidating the political and military situation of the region on the shoulders of those involved in the conflict.

Most political experts also believe that NATO's recent action reflects the increase of pressure on the Bosnian Government by America for expelling Muslim fighters from that country. One month after the dateline in the Dayton peace accord — concerning the expelling of the non-Bosnian Muslims military people from that country — there are still a number of such people present in Bosnia. This limited number of Muslim fighters — who for three years have been fighting side by side the [Bosnian] Muslims against Serb aggressors — have declared their readiness to participate in the Bosnian reconstruction. But the Western political and military experts are trying to give the impression that the continuation of the presence of the fighters is considered as a potential threat against the NATO peacekeeping forces' positions and the peace process.

Up until the action by NATO forces in finding the military center and their arrest of some military people, the Bosnian Government's response to the expelling of foreign Muslim military people was taken as a touchstone to gauge the liking or lack of interest by the Bosnian Government towards America and the NATO forces. But from now on America intends to take upon itself the total implementation of the plan to expel non-native Muslims from that country.

On the other hand, it seems that at the moment the United States of America is trying to reduce the burden of its financial and policial commitments vis-a-vis the peace accord. After the belligerent dimensions in Bosnia became further complicated, the Washington administration managed to present an apparently positive record concerning its foreign policy in the Balkan crisis. Now it intends to reassess the existing conditions to continue to pursue further political interests in the region and thus maintain its unchallenged domination over the multi-national NATO force.

Anyhow, the need for establishing and maintaining peace in the area requires the NATO forces to carry out international regulations with more determination and away from the self-interested objectives of their respective countries. It is not improbable that the violation of the sovereignty of the Bosnian Government within the territorial boundaries of that country will result in further encouragment to the Serbs to create a role for themselves in the region and pervert the course of the true peace process.

Iran: Daily Cites Foreign Ministry on Discovery of Camp in Bosnia

LD1702082796 Tehran IRNA in English 0814 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 17, IRNA — The recent U.S. ballyhoo on the discovery of a camp in Bosnia is part of the White House's attempt to overshadow anti-Zionist protests on Qods day, the English morning daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' reported Saturday, quoting an informed source at the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

A U.S. commander of the NATO peace Implementation Force (IFOR) claimed on Friday that NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) forces had discovered a

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camp in Fojnica and took into custody eight Bosnians and three Iranians.

The Foreign Ministry source said the three Iranians who were taken have diplomatic immunity, adding they were officials who were earlier engaged in rendering humanitarian assistance to the Bosnian people.

He stressed the three have recently returned to that country and were not involved in any kind of military activity.

He stressed that U.S. officials resorted to such acts in an attempt to overshadow Qods day, further stating the visit to Iran of Louis Farrakhan, head of the Nation of Islam, has infuriated and made the U.S. want to retaliate.

According to a statement issued by the Interior Ministry of Bosnia, which has jurisdiction over the country's police force, the camp had earlier been a training site, but was closed subsequent to the Dayton Peace Accord and the arrival of NATO forces, TEHRAN TIMES concluded.

Iran: Embassy in Sarajevo Issues Statement on NATO 'Attack'

LD1802113396 Tehran IRNA in English 0722 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Sarajevo, Feb. 18, IRNA — A statement issued Saturday [17 February] by the Iranian Embassy in Bosnia-Herzegovina said the NATO attack on a Bosnian police training camp was a pre-planned move.

In a bid to overshahdow the massive rallies of Muslims on international Qods day held throughout the world, forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led by their U.S. commander raided the camp, the statement added.

An Iranian citizen at the camp was attacked and beaten up by NATO soldiers, it said, adding that according to eyewitnesses, the group also intimidated and arrested two other Iranians who were passing by the site.

Condemning the attitude of NATO forces towards the Iranian citizens, the Embassy of the Islamic republic stressed that the move violated international law, as well as the rules and regulations in Bosnia.

Iran has the honor to do all within its capabilities to preserve the legitimate rights of Muslims and the defenseless people of Bosnia, even during the most difficult conditions of the war, the statement stressed, adding that Tehran is ready to render any help towards the reconstruction of their war-stricken country.

It further expressed hope that NATO forces would desist from acting based on the profit-seeking objectives of their governments and would not turn into occupying forces in the perception of the Bosnian people.

Iran: Daily Comments on Bosnian Muslims, Western Powers

LD1802113696 Tehran IRNA in English 0828 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb. 18, IRNA — If other Muslims had not rushed to help the defenseless Bosnians when the war was imposed on them some five years ago, the wishes of most of the western leaders to obliterate the Muslim nation of Bosnia would have been fulfilled today, a morning daily said Sunday.

Stressing that unlike their serb aggressors, the Bosnian muslims were not armed, not trained militarily and could not defend themselves properly, the English paper 'IRAN NEWS' wrote, "a small number of Muslims from Islamic countries were sent there to help the oppressed Bosnians."

It emphasized that these people who assisted the Bosnians in their time of need were Mujahedeens and not terrorists.

Reacting to the arrest on Thursday of 11 people, including three Iranians, from and around a Bosnian training camp by forces of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, NATO, it noted that the western media following the line of their governments, promptly labelled those arested as "terrorists".

Clarifying who the real terrorists were, the article underlined that when the Balkan tragedy erupted, there were frequent massacres of innocent and defenseless people.

Nevertheless, "we have no record of 'terrorist' bombings in Belgrade or Pale during the years of tragedy that displaced 2.7 million people, a million refugees and 5,000 missing men only from the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica," it noted.

When the Serbs committed their atrocious acts against the Bosnian Muslims, "did the Serbs alone commit their terrorist acts in Sarajevo, Gorazde and Srebrenica, or did they receive a 'green light' from the world's big powers?", it underscored.

Saying that no record is available of weapons being supplied to the Bosnian Muslims during the war, IRAN NEWS asserted that the U.N. weapons embargo instigated by the big powers, instead of punishing the Serbs, was in fact meant to deprive the Bosnian Muslims the means to defend themselves.

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Iran: Commentary Views Discovery of Military Base in Bosnia

NC1802195496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New difficulties have recently cropped up between the disputing parties in the Balkan region and the multinational force which belongs to NATO and is assigned to keep peace in the region. This shows that there are complications in the peace agreement on Bosnia-Herzegovina. These complications also led to the failure of the talks held by U.S. Administration envoys Christopher and Holbrooke in the region to eliminate the obstacles to implementation of the Dayton Agreement.

The White House administration decided to reconsider its commitments to funding and training the Bosnian police force under the pretext that the disputing parties failed to create an atmosphere of confidence. In light of this, the U.S. State Department announced the discovery of a military base and claimed that it was a headquarters for terrorist operations backed by the Bosnian Government. The State Department did this to justify its stance and actions outlined in the peace agreement on the Balkan region, where the largest number of U.S. forces are incorporated within the multinational force. Also, the multinational force claimed that the main headquarters of the terrorist units was located 40 km west of Sarajevo. They claimed that the units sought to carry out acts of terror against the NATO forces deployed in the region.

The Bosnian Government, however, denied these fabricated claims and accusations and announced that the aforementioned base is a center for training special units in missions to uncover and arrest war criminals. It also emphasized its commitment to the peace agreement and to refraining from any act that might infringe on or violate the agreement.

What counts here is that these differences and sensitivities show that the multinational force lacks a firm and concerted desire to help establish a permanent peace in the region. Also, such incidents cannot justify the multinational force's stalling and failure to implement its mission in Bosnia, which only began 60 days ago. Nevertheless, it seems from the latest pressure that the United States has begun to apply on the Bosnian Government, particularly at the current stage when the disputing parties protested in Rome and demanded assessment and consideration of the peace agreement, that the White House is trying to give up part of its obligations and agreements concluded with the Bosnian Government. With these efforts, the White House is seeking to obtain concessions from the Bosnian Government and to justify its foreign policy and strengthen its stance for its domestic public in preparation for the upcoming presidential elections.

Iran: Tehran Views 'Positive' Result of Rome Conference on Bosnia

NC1902081496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 19 Feb 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Rome conference attended by the presidents of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, and Croatia to reemphasize the Dayton Agreement ended yesterday after achieving relatively positive results.

The tiring debates on removing the differences between the Bosnian and Croatian Governments on the management of Mostar meant the conference ended two hours later than planned. In a communique issued after the conference the presidents of the three disputing countries in the Balkan region agreed on seven important points. [passage omitted]

Although the disputing heads of the Balkan states took steps toward removing the obstacles to peace there is a long way to go before true and lasting peace is achieved. Much remains to be done. Fulfilling the objective is closely linked with the persistent efforts of the international community and with the granting of more guarantees by the conflicting sides.

For the international peace mediators, the Balkan summit in Rome is more important than simply preserving peace, because political observers believe that if the peace agreement again disintegrates and becomes a temporary and costly cease-fire, it will have dire consequences for the main actors on the international scene. Efforts to maintain international prestige find the Western mediators working harder than before to achieve rapprochement among the conflicting sides while making the best political use of peace's achievements to prevent the dangerous consequences of an all-embracing war in the Balkans.

Iran: UN Envoy Says Iran May Cooperate in Human Rights Investigation

LD1702154896 Bern Swiss Radio International in English 1500 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United Nations special representative for human rights in Iran says he feels the Iranian Government is willing to cooperate with UN investigations into the country's human rights situation.

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Maurice Copithorne returned from a six-day visit to Tehran saying he did not think the Iranian authorities had prevented people from seeing him. However, he declined to assess the human rights situation in Iran until the completion of a report for the UN Human Rights Commission next month.

Iran: Military Officers, 1 Qatari Among 4 Said To Spy for Doha

NC1902113596 Paris AFP in English 1119 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 19 (AFP)—Four people including two military officers and a Qatari have been arrested in Iran on charges of spying for Doha using women as bait, the newspaper Sobh [name as received] reported Monday [19 February].

The weekly did not reveal the names of the suspects or when they were arrested, but it said an Iranian businessman was the other member of the network.

The foreign ministry, contacted by AFP, was unable to confirm the report.

The weekly, quoting "informed" sources, said the Qatari had established contacts with Iranian officials and military officers "under the cover of business affairs."

He organized "depraved parties and seduced debauched unbelievers in the government, the judiciary and the army," it said. Seventy Iranian women had been "corrupted."

The network also "collected information on Iran's weapons arsenal, the social condition and level of popular discontent" in Iran during the 1980-1988 war against Iraq, Sobh added.

Iran: 'Extremists' Attack People at Memorial for Poet

NC1602175096 Paris AFP in English 0816 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Feb 16 (AFP)—A group of Muslim extremists attacked people attending a memorial service for an Iranian nationalist poet in a Tehran mosque, leaving several injured, witnesses said Friday [16 February].

Several hundred Iranians had gathered at Al-Hassan mosque in the north of the capital on Thursday for a religious service in memory of poet Siavosh Kasrai, who died last week in Austria.

A group of around 15 fundamentalists blocked the exits, and beat panic-stricken members of the congregation as they tried to leave, injuring some slightly, witnesses said.

They then gathered outside the mosque chanting anti-nationalist slogans. Security forces at the scene did not intervene.

The attack was confirmed Friday by a statement from the Iran People's Party led by Dariush Foruhar, a small nationalist organisation which is generally tolerated by the government.

Extremist groups calling themselves Hezbollahi, or members of the Party of God, have stepped up attacks in recent months against members of liberal and intellectual Islamic circles.

They have burned down a library, attacked teachers and journalists and harassed women and young people judged to be wearing non-Islamic clothing.

They appear to be unhindered by authorities, and have received public backing from religious hardliners led by ayatollah Ahmad Jannati who has encouraged them to make up for the "weakness" of the government by cracking down on signs of decadent Western culture.

Iran: Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Plans To Eradicate Poverty

LD1602214496 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0845 GMT 16 Feb 96

[Second Friday sermon by President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the compassionate, the merciful. [passage omitted]

There are several small issues that I want to speak to you about. [passage omitted]

Another issue that I must speak about in this sermon in more detail is an issue which I recently raised at the Plan [and Budget] Organization as a measure to eradicate poverty in our society. It is a most important issue which is being introduced at this juncture. I believe it to be useful to explain the principles of that idea since it is an idea which is officially entering our plan for the first time and is to be implemented. [passage omitted]

What do we want to do? It is the beginning of the work and I am unable to give you a clear picture of the objectives but I can give you an overall view of it. [passage omitted]

The aim is to define what poverty is. What is defined as poverty should not exist among [our] people. We should do something so that there are no impoverished people

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among us. Now, whether that is possible or not is what I am going to tell you.

Generally speaking, a group — several groups — should work out what poverty means in our society. The basic requirements of human beings, such as food, clothing, housing, medical treatment, health, recreation — within limits of the needs of human beings — and such like. How much of that is acceptable for a family? Of course that always fluctuates and has to be defined according to the level of the resources of the community. That is the first task. It is then that it will become clear that under the existing circumstances a certain number of people must be looked after in another way so that they are not considered poor according to that definition. From the point of view of extreme poverty, the issue, as I am describing it, is not urgent. There are some who work more and have more, there are some who are content within the limits of a moderate life. There are some who are more lucky and can make better use of available resources. But that is another issue. At the moment we are looking for the lower sector of the people. [passage omitted]

How should we help those people so that they are no longer in need according to that definition? The first question is where will you get resources? There are numerous sources in the country. Several groups have been given the task of identifying those sources. One source is taxation; there is much taxation which has not been collected. I do not wish to give any figures here. If we collect the correct tax at the same level as now — not at a higher level — from the trade in the country a huge amount can come into the coffers. At the moment a majority of trade is done by methods outside the taxation register. We have come up with something about that and we are working on it.

Second, there are still a great deal of subsidies that are being given to the country's well-to-do strata which amount to millions of dollars — for fuel and many other things. A part of those unreasonable aids which we are giving to those with full stomachs and those not in need can be used to fill a large part of those inappropriate shortcomings. Again, I won't give you any figures but later you will get to know them.

Another issue, which will be tackled before all that, is employment. We will not go to the people and say to them come and get it. At the moment our country has reached conditions where we can create employment for our society, for anyone who wishes to work, women, men and the young — ranging from handicrafts, mine work, other productive jobs, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, jobs which are not capital intensive. The government will make the investments where it is needed.

Some of us who are very optimistic about this say that if the employment plan is implemented we will have no poor people. [passage omitted]

Our first step is employment. Following that, for those whose who still remain in need after the employment plan, the next step is social insurance. In this way, let's say that someone is unemployed. During that period he should draw a salary from the government commensurate with what a needy person at that level should get until an employment is found for him. That is what exists in the world. In the rich countries of the world all receive an 80 percent salary [as heard].

Right now we have a great amount of cash relief in the community but since it is not regulated it does not have those effects. Even in this year's budget if you take the government's direct aids, which is given to the people through charity organs, they come to thousands of billions of rials. Those are beside the subsidies and other things, most of which are wasted on non-needy people. [passage omitted]

After a period, which I cannot specify now, we will reform our plan in this regard and remove that ignominy from our country since the current situation is not commensurate with the country of the Lord of the Age. [crowd chants: "God is great," "Khamene'i is the leader"] [passage omitted]

God willing, we hope to succeed in carrying out this pledge which we have given you here at the Friday prayers. If I had thought that it was not feasible I would not have raised it on this holy podium. God willing, may it become implemented. We need extensive support. [passage omitted]

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Discusses Foreign Relations Issues

BK1702090296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said there is a consensus in Pakistan between different political parties on the basic issues confronting the country. She said governments in the recent past have had almost the same policy on India, the United States, the nuclear issue, Kashmir, Afghanistan, privatization, economic deregulation, and liberalization. In an interview with the leading Saudi daily ARAB NEWS during her recent visit to Riyadh, she said that Pakistan has always attached special importance to its relations with Saudi Arabia. These ties are based on identical political views. She said Pakistan played a political part in

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the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan and she hoped that Pakistan could play an important role in the resolution of Kashmir and Afghanistan issues.

The prime minister criticized India's regional ambitions and its missile program, which is a potential threat to global peace. The prime minister said that India's missiles are capable of carrying nuclear warheads that can go beyond the Indian subcontinent to Yemen and Egypt. Responding to a question, the prime minister said she completely rejects the third option [preceding word in English] on Kashmir, saying it is a conspiracy against the Kashmiri people. She fully supports UN resolutions calling for a plebiscite. Benazir Bhutto also accused India of meddling in the affairs of Karachi. She said India has set up 39 training camps to train people to cause trouble in Karachi. She expressed satisfaction over the improvement of situation in Karachi, but added that there is a lot more to be done.

The prime minister flatly denied allegations that China supplied ring magnets to Pakistan. She did say that China is building Pakistan a 300—megawatt nuclear power station at Chashma, but this power station is within international safeguards.

Regarding relations with the United States, Benazir Bhutto said they are better than ever. She said when the People's Party came to power, it was facing a very difficult situation. Aid and assistance to Pakistan was stopped and Pakistan was in danger of being declared a terrorist state. She said the nation took steps to demonstrate that Pakistan was committed to its international responsibilities. Now Pakistan has been coordinating with the United States and other countries in tackling terrorism and narcotics. She expressed the hope that Pakistan-U.S. relations will continue to improve.

Pakistan: Bhutto—Country Capable of Countering External Threats

BK1802165696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Commissioning the $190-million Qadirpur gas field near Sukkur today, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said while the government is trying to steer the nation to an honorable and prosperous future through solid planning and proper utilization of national resources, opportunists and vested interests are fanning parochialism and encouraging terrorism and drug trafficking in order to disturb the country's economic development. Situated 80 km northeast of Sukkur, Qadirpur gas field is the country's third biggest with an estimated 3.18 trillion cubic feet gas reserves. The gas field has also a treatment system which is the world's largest. With the commissioning of the Qadirpur gas field, the country's dependence on imported energy will be reduced to a large extent. It will also provide greater employment opportunities and lead to economic development of the less developed area. The Qadirpur project — a joint venture of OGDC [Oil and Gas Development Corporation], Pakistan Petroleum, Burma Oil, and Premier Oil — is a shining example of private and public sector partnership. The prime minister formally commissioned the plant by pressing the button.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said her government's policy is to facilitate all citizens with basic amenities, and gas, being an easy, cheap, and environment-friendly resource, is being transmitted to the remotest villages under this policy.

Referring to India's option of nuclear program and launching of Prithvi missile, the prime minister said Pakistan today is standing at the crossroads endangered with chauvinistic designs of our neighbor, India, which poses a threat to all the countries in this region. Pakistan, she said, cannot remain idle in this situation. The unity of our nation is the need of the hour. She said agents of vested interests in connivance with anti-Pakistan elements have joined hands to detract the people of Pakistan from the path of progress and self-reliance which is the basic aim of her government. But, she said we are fully capable of overcoming internal as well as external threats being faced by Pakistan today.

Pakistani Foreign Minister Rejects U.S. Reports on Ring Magnet Supply

BK1802161596 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that the objective of Indian plans to conduct a thermonuclear test is to subvert the international community's efforts for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. He was addressing a news conference in Islamabad this evening on his return from an official visit to the United States. The foreign minister pointed out that India needs warheads and is attempting to acquire fusion technology. He said India has installed various elements [preceding word in English] around the Pokaran site, which have been observed by a U.S. communications satellite and substantiated by intelligence reports.

The foreign minister said Pakistan is concerned over the unleashing of a missile race in South Asia by India, which has now become the biggest single obstacle to the signing of the CTBT.

Answering a question, he said the United States is greatly concerned over India's nuclear missile program.

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and Pakistan has been assured that Washington will do everything possible to force India to adopt a responsible attitude. He said the two sides reviewed the implementation of the Brown Amendment providing for the supply of arms and equipment to Pakistan. He said Pakistan was not officially informed that there would be a delay in the supply of this equipment.

The foreign minister rejected U.S. intelligence reports about the transfer of ring magnets by China to Pakistan, and described them as baseless.

Regarding Kashmir, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said there has been a sudden increase in oppressive actions against the Kashmiri people. He said he urged the U.S. Administration to participate more effectively in UN efforts to establish peace in Afghanistan. The two sides agreed that the Afghan problem can be resolved only by the Afghans themselves, the foreign minister added.

Pakistan: Further on Foreign Minister's Remarks on Ring Magnet Issue

BK1902092096 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 19 Feb 96 pp 1, 4

[Article by Aroosa Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Feb 18: Admitting for the first time officially that the USA has raised serious concern about the reports of Pakistan allegedly procuring 5000 ring magnets from China to enrich weapon grade uranium, Islamabad announced Sunday evening that it suspected that the delivery of military equipment worth 360 million US dollars under the Brown Law may be delayed till the time the US Administration ascertains the veracity of these intelligence reports.

In a special briefing prior to an Iftar hosted by him, the Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali told newsmen that though not officially communicated, Islamabad suspected that the delivery of equipment may be delayed due to inspired and well orchestrated press leaks raising serious doubts about Pakistan's credibility as a committed non-proliferationist.

On the other hand, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that Pakistan has credible reports confirming that India was preparing for a Thermal nuclear test to match its missile technology and is determined to subvert international efforts for a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

In his first encounter with the media on return from his ten days visit to the USA after holding comprehensive bilateral talks with senior US officials on security situation in South Asia, on Pakistan's perceptions of rise in tension between India and Pakistan, Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali announced in a firm tone "by remaining within the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) Pakistan is determined to meet any new challenges that are posed to its security".

He said Pakistan was against the arms and missile race and has in fact proposed many a time zero missile zone in South Asia but India's test of Prithvi and development of Agni (ICBM) has pushed Pakistan to give serious consideration for appropriate measures for its security.

The Foreign Minister said that India needed the warheads and was attempting to achieve fusion technology through thermo nuclear test. He pointed out that the site imageries picked up by the US spy satellite and further substantiated by our own intelligence reports confirm that the instrumentation at Pokaran was done to facilitate a thermo nuclear test. He said if India goes for a nuclear test, it is for the world community to judge the intentions of India in South Asia.

Referring to some very weak and ambiguous denials by the Indian leadership about the plans to carry out another nuclear test, the Foreign Minister said we have very little room to believe Indian leadership which instead of issuing a categorical denial said that India reserves the right to exercise nuclear option.

The Foreign Minister said it is very sad to note that while the world community has not taken serious note of ominous acts of India, Pakistan is being blamed for not adhering to non proliferation disciplines in South Asia.

He said Pakistan does not deny at all having cooperation with China over the construction of Chashma nuclear power plant but no clandestine supply has taken place between the two countries.

He said Chashma power plant is under full scope IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] safeguards and there is no question of any diversion for military purposes.

The Foreign Minister said that the stories were leaked to press at a time when President Clinton was to issue a clean bill of health to Pakistan on non-proliferation by giving his determination to the Congress regarding Brown Amendment. "But we hope that US administration will not fall prey to the trap of those forces out to destroy relations between USA, China and Pakistan" he said.

Replying to a question Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali said that delivery of equipment by USA is not a favour and has not been agreed upon any quid pro quo but it is a legislative obligation of the US administration to comply with it.

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Terming India, the biggest obstacle in the way of successful conclusion of CTBT, Sardar Asif Ali said that Pakistan was for the early conclusion of CTBT but not unilaterally. He said it is now up to the world community to force India to sign CTBT.

Dilating upon his meetings in Washington and New York, the Foreign Minister said he held extensive discussions on Pak-US bilateral relations with the Acting Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, Deputy Advisor on National Security and Secretary energy and also met with the UN Secretary General Dr Butrus—Ghali.

The Foreign Minister said that he urged the US administration to participate more meaningfully in the UN efforts to bring peace to Afghanistan. Both the sides agreed that Afghan solution must be found by Afghan themselves.

They have agreed on the need for non-interference in Afghanistan neutrality towards all Afghan leaders, unity of Afghanistan and the formation of a broad based government there.

Sardar Asif said he stressed that the peace in Afghanistan must be based on the aspiration of Afghan people and reflect the ground realities, ethnic realities and inclusion of all political groups and leaders in and outside Afghanistan.

He said I also proposed to UN Secretary General to first enforce demilitarisation of Kabul and formation of an Afghan Peace Force followed by the establishment of an interim council.

Answering a question the Foreign Minister said that he informed the Secretary General that time was running out in Kabul for peace and efforts to establish an interim council must be intensified before a fresh wave of hostilities erupts.

He said Pakistan has also proposed that UN can send observers and OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] can provide with a neutral force for the removal of heavy and light military equipment from and around Kabul with a simultaneous establishment of interim mechanism' council.

Answering a question, he said, there is lot of concern in the United States over Indian missile programme and Pakistan has been assured that the United States will do every thing within its means to make India act responsibility.

He said they examined the provisions of the implementation of Brown Amendment which provides for the release of arms and ammunition to Pakistan. He said Pakistan has not been officially told that there will be delay in the delivery of these arms but because of baseless reports about the transfer of some technology to Pakistan in the media, there might be some delay.

The Foreign Minister rejected the US intelligence report about the transfer of Chinese ring magnets to Pakistan and described it baseless.

About Kashmir, he said, there has been a sudden increase in acts of repression against the Kashmiri people. He said even after the rocket attack by India on Forward Kahuta, India fired rockets on the 16th and 17th of this month these provocation's are increasing every day and the tone of Indian leadership is becoming more and more threatening.

Pakistan: Foreign Minister Says 'No Power Can Force' Signing of CTBT

BK1802152696 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali, who returned to Islamabad after his visit to the United States, has said no power can force Pakistan to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT]. Pakistan's stand on this is based on principles that Pakistan cannot sign this treaty unless India does the same.

[Begin Ali recording] Nobody can twist Pakistan's arms. I can assure you of that; but Pakistan is for an early conclusion of CTBT. It is India which has now become the biggest single obstacle to the early signing of CTBT; and the world attention should be focused on India. [end recording]

When asked what will be Pakistan's reaction if India carries out a thermal nuclear test, he said Pakistan will respond in a manner it thinks is appropriate in the circumstances.

Sardar Asif Ahmad Ali denied reports that he had dashed to Washington. It was a routine visit, he said, which he undertook to discuss bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States.

Pakistan: Editorial Says U.S. Feeding Delhi's Nuclear Program

BK2002083596 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 20 Feb 96 p 7

[Editorial: "America's Self-Made Monster"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The findings of the Risk Report, which the Washington-based Wisconsin Project on Nuclear Arms Control has compiled, only reconfirms, albeit in greater detail, what is known to all: the critical mass for India's nuclear and missile programme

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has come from countries like the United States, Germany and France. But read against the backdrop of the crescendo in the US over nuclear proliferation in South Asia, it acquires greater significance. It gives the American crusade against the spread of weapons of mass destruction in the region an obvious undertone of hypocrisy.

As the report points out, the Indians got the elements of their nuclear programme together in the sixties with the help of the US: American companies exported weapon-grade material and technical facilities to the Indians. Even in the nineties, when the US has made a bogey out of South Asia's nuclear problem, its vast industrial complex has been instrumental in the hardening of the Indians' nuclear muscle.

The argument that these are business and commerce transactions which are hard to control does not wash Washington of "the act of feeding the monster of the Indian nuclear programme and a sophisticated, computerised missile system." The more so since the US has been bullying and harassing countries like Pakistan, who are directly threatened by India on mere suspicions that they are acquiring nuclear-related technology. The hottest example of this is the renewed allegations that China supplied Pakistan ring magnets to help it upgrade its nuclear facilities. However, this contradiction in US policy, which on the one hand seeks to circumscribe the spread of nuclear weapons and on the other hand allows, in the shape of its export policy, rogue states to make nuclear hay, is only one reason why Delhi looks so menacing today.

The other reason is that successive US administrations have conveniently overlooked the rapid strides India has taken on the nuclear path. They turned the heat on Pakistan's nuclear programme but kept India's in the cool shadow of studied neglect. This hypocritical and discriminatory attitude is evident even today, when the professed aim of the American policy in the region is to treat India and Pakistan evenhandedly.

As long as this contradiction, that is locked into the US approach towards the problem of nuclear arms race in South Asia is not resolved, Washington will keep on going round in circles in the region, causing nausea to everyone.

Pakistan: Editorial Says Foreign Minister 'Helpless' During U.S. Trip

BK2002084496 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Feb 96 p 6

[Editorial: "Sardar Asif's Jaunt"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Foreign Minister Sardar Asif Ali, on his return from a visit to the US, has stated during a Press briefing that the US is under a moral and legislative obligation to deliver the held up weapons and equipment cleared by the Brown Amendment. Their delivery is not considered a favour by us, he said. He described as "very unfortunate" the reported delay in the delivery of the equipment on account of the allegation that Pakistan had received weapons-related nuclear technology from China.

The Foreign Minister stated that the US administration had not taken an official stand on the issue and was generally cautious pending, as administration spokesmen have put it, a determination whether the reports had any substance to them. These speculative, planted reports have been denied by both Pakistan and China. Nevertheless a sustained media campaign continues in the US, recycling the same reports, ascribed to unnamed intelligence sources such as the notorious CIA.

What this shows is that there is a tussle going on at present between the US administration, which appears sceptical about the veracity of the allegations and understands the damage to US strategic and commercial interests if the reports are taken seriously, and those vested interest lobbies which have banded together to indulge in their favourite pastime of Pakistan and China bashing. These lobbies include non-proliferationist hawks, anti-communist relics of the cold war, and quite conceivably pro-India and pro-Israel elements within the intelligence community and Congress. The fate of Pakistan's held up weapons and equipment, which we have paid for, may rest on the outcome of this tussle. Sardar Asif's optimism that despite the unfortunate delay, the US is nevertheless morally and legislatively obliged to deliver the equipment, may well turn out to be true, but the uncertainty that has the issue in its grip is just another illustration of how one- sided and unfavourable to us the Pakistan US relationship really is.

Sardar Asif pointed out the obvious anomaly in the world community's attitude to Pakistan and India when it is patently clear that India is the source of recent tension in the Subcontinent because of its provocation's across the Line of Control in Azad Kashmir, its defiance of international opinion vis-a-vis its intended second nuclear explosion and missile development and deployment programme, its recent about-face on signing

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the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] of which India itself was one of the original sponsors, and its continuing campaign of bloody repression in Held Kashmir. Despite these well known facts, it is Pakistan which is the focus of a well-orchestrated campaign of vilification by the non-proliferationist and other lobbies, while India gets away scot-free with its defiance of international opinion.

Sardar Asif's visit, whose central purpose was said to be a discussion with the Americans on Afghanistan, was overtaken by the appearance of these reports in the American Press soon after his arrival. That may have been deliberate timing to embarrass Sardar Asif, but it must be said that his response while in Washington was less than adequate. Apart from a flat denial of the report of nuclear technology transfer, he made little effort to take advantage of his presence in Washington to mount an effective riposte to the malign campaign against Pakistan.

Surely the Foreign Minister of Pakistan is not so helpless in the capital of the only superpower that he could not even hold a Press conference to blow the story out of the water, or mobilise Pakistan's friends in Congress and the administration to come to our aid. While the Foreign Minister was magnanimous enough to shower praise on Nawaz Sharif's presentation of Pakistan's case in a Washington think-tank, his own management of the problem can hardly be termed energetic. The double irony is that the purported agenda for which the trip was taken, Afghanistan, seems to have failed to excite US interest apart from a trenchant comment by Acting Secretary of State Strobe Talbott that the situation in Afghanistan was being complicated by too much "foreign interference".

Pakistan: 'Official Sources' Deny Exchange of Fire With Indian Forces

BK1702144996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Official sources in Lahore denied an AFP report that seven Bangladesh nationals trying to cross the border with the help of Pakistani rangers were killed in a cross-fire between India and Pakistani security forces in the border state of Rajasthan. Clarifying the report, these sources said the Indian Border Security Force [BSF] in Anupgarh sector yesterday requested an urgent flag meeting with Pakistan rangers. In the meeting, the Indian side handed over seven bodies and 76 Pakistani nationals — all Hindus — who allegedly were trying to cross over into India during the night between Thursday and Friday and were intercepted and fired upon by Indian Border Security Force. No exchange of fire took place between Pakistan rangers and Indian BSF as alleged in the AFP report. The dead included four men, one woman, and two children. The wounded six in number, included one woman and five children, have been admitted to a local hospital. The sources once again debunked the Indian propaganda of accusing Pakistan of infiltrating people into the Indian territory and termed it as a favorite Indian hobby to cover its own wrongdoings.

Pakistan: Police Kill 8 MQM Members in Karachi

BK1602144396 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 16 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Karachi today, eight terrorists of Altaf Group were killed and two arrested in an encounter with police in Orangi Town.

According to details, police received an information that terrorists were hiding in a house in Farooq Colony of Orangi Town Sector 11-A and were planning to destroy the telephone exchange. When the police party reached the spot, the terrorists started firing on the police party, which returned the fire in self defense. According to police eight terrorists were killed. A police head constable, Mahmudul Hassan, also sustained bullet wounds. The leader of the terrorist group, Hassan Akhtar, was also killed in the firing. He was leader of MQM [Muhahir Qaumi Movement] Altaf Group's terrorists of Sector 11-E Orangi Town and was wanted in over two dozen cases of killing, kidnapping, and other terrorist activities. Two terrorists were also arrested in injured condition. Police also recovered two Kalashnikovs, rifles, three TT-pistols, one Mauser [pistol], one revolver, and a number of rounds.

Pakistan: One Altaf Group 'Terrorist,' Other Suspects Arrested

BK1802164796 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 18 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Karachi, police today arrested a terrorist named Irfan Zai, who had formerly been in charge of an Altaf Group unit in Faridi Town. The terrorist and his accomplices were arrested in a police encounter, and two Kalashnikov rifles and three TT pistols were recovered from them.

According to a press release issued by the Karachi police, an Afghani camp near the Super Highway was raided, and Mohammad Azim Sattar, Gujjar Khan, Mohammad Nawaz, and other members of this gang were arrested after identification. A large quantity of arms, including a rocket launcher, two light machine guns, 12 Kalashnikovs, one sten gun, 15 pistols, 12 magazines, and three rocket launcher fuses were recovered from them. It has been said that the culprits were involved in

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supplying arms and ammunition to the Altaf Group for acts of terrorism.

Pakistan: Seven Killed in Karachi Violence; Soldiers Seize Arms

BK2002023096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 20 Feb 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A press note issued in Karachi says that at least seven people were killed and same number of people injured in the city yesterday. Four of the injured were victims of terrorist acts.

According to police, Gulbahar Police arrested a terrorist named Shahid who belongs to the Altaf Group. He was involved in dozens of cases of abduction, murder, and terrorism. Soldiers of the Frontier Corps have foiled an attempt to smuggle arms and ammunition into interior Sindh for acts of terrorism and subversion. They seized a large consignment of arms that included 14 Kalashnikovs, 41 hand grenades, one submachinegun, 14 rifles of 7-mm caliber, and 47 shells of missiles.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: LTTE 'in Disarray' After Government Call for Foreign Help

BK1702120496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 17 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Reports reaching from Jaffna point out that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] is in disarray following Sri Lanka's request to other countries to take action against the organization. The LTTE has said that it will have to face hardships in future following this request. Its branch offices abroad will be severely affected. President Chandrika Kumaratunga inaugurating the third session of the third parliament on the 9th of this month made an appeal to the international community to take action against the LTTE and organizations encouraging terrorism in Sri Lanka. In a statement issued to the people in the north on the following day of the president's speech, the political headquarters of the LTTE had said that certain countries might positively heed the appeal. It had said that such countries would even extend military assistance to the Sri Lankan Government and obstruct its activities.

The northern sources also point out that the LTTE is going to adopt various tactics to face future challenges. One method is to attempt to make the world aware that the people in the north were with their organization. However, a political party active in the north has said that this would not be successful. It said that the international community has clearly understood that the LTTE and the Tamil people were two different groups.

Sri Lanka: Foreign Minister Hails Malaysian Crackdown on LTTE

BK1902084496 Hong Kong AFP in English 0800 GMT 19 Feb 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Colombo, Feb 19 (AFP) — Malaysia's decision to outlaw open support for the Tamil Tigers was welcomed by Sri Lanka Monday [19 February] as a major breakthrough in its diplomatic drive to block foreign fund raising and propaganda for the rebels.

"This is very, very encouraging to us indeed," Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar told AFP. "Every single step has a cumulative effect and we can expect more and more countries to follow suit."

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) are known to operate about 40 offices abroad.

Kadirgamar said Malaysia was the second country after India to act against activities supporting the LTTE and described it as a "very significant and major development."

The Malaysian government announced Monday it would revoke the permanent residency status of foreigners involved in demonstrations supporting Sri Lanka's separatist guerrilla movement, and that it would charge anyone taking part in pro-Tiger rallies with causing unrest. [passage omitted]

Malaysia's Deputy Home Minister Megat Junid Megat Ayob was quoted as saying that police were investigating reports that some foreigners and Malaysians had taken part in pro-Tiger demonstrations at several embassies in Kuala Lumpur.

"The government will not condone any demonstration which supports terrorist activities," said Megat Junid, adding the Tamil Tigers were known for their mass murders and acts of terrorism.

Megat Junid also warned those taking part in any of the demonstrations would be arrested for causing unrest.

The demonstrators in Kuala Lumpur had also criticised the Indian government for not supporting the Tamil Tigers. [passage omitted]

Sri Lanka: LTTE Arms Ship Reportedly Originated from Thailand

BK1702094796 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 17 Feb 96

[Unattributed report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The real name of the LTTE's [Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam] armaments vessel

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destroyed by the Navy and the Air Force in a combined assault on high seas off the Mullaitivu coast on Wednesday [14 February] was 'Comex-Joux 3', possibly registered in Liberia, investigators said yesterday.

They also had uncovered evidence pointing to the possibility that the vessel with the lethal cargo had originated from 'Phuket' harbour in Thailand.

The destruction of this vessel had reduced the LTTE's fleet to two, the same sources said. Two of the terrorist transport vessels 'Tongnove' and 'Ahat' were earlier destroyed by the Indian Navy. The then Tiger No. 2 Kittu also perished with Ahat.

The diary of events leading to the destruction of this ship is as follows.

On February 8, the navy was informed by Interpol and friendly countries, that a vessel, belonging to the Tiger terrorists, and loaded with dubious cargo, left the shores of a South East Asian country.

No sooner the navy received this news, than had they established a security zone, off the eastern coast of the country, and established radio contact with vessels traversing those seas.

Sri Lanka: Editorial Views LTTE Fund Raising, Criticizes BBC

BK1902030696 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 19 Feb 96

[Editorial: "Shut Them Down" — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Washington is perturbed by the discovery of a training school for terrorists run by the Bosnian Serbs on Bosnian territory. What was even more perturbing for Washington was the information that the terrorists were being trained by three Iranians. In London it was reported that a sum of 1,000,000 sterling pounds, the largest ever in the UK, was being offered by a donor, who preferred to remain anonymous, for information that would lead to the arrest of the bomber or bombers who shattered London's calm with an explosion that killed two and injured a hundred.

In Athens the American embassy narrowly escaped being destroyed by a rocket grenade which landed on a nearby car park destroying a number of vehicles. This is the news to be gathered from last week's papers. All these countries would have been glad to hear that terrorists who were bringing a shipload of arms to the north eastern coast of Lanka ran into a combined operation conducted by Sri Lanka's security forces who destroyed the ship including over a dozen Tigers.

The glad news, however, did not seem glad enough for the BBC's man here to spread the word around. But we think he should shake himself free of the romanticism that he surrounds these bloodthirsty killers with. When Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar visited some Western countries a few months back and tried to tell them to close down the Tiger centres in Western capitals he was asked to provide evidence of inimical Tiger activities over there. Naturally it is difficult to convince some of these countries because for over a decade the Tigers were being presented to western audiences by their own media as the liberators of the Tamil people who were being oppressed by Sinhala Buddhist chauvinists. Mr. Kadirgamar admitted to them that it was difficult to provide such evidence, but he has not given up his task.

Speaking in parliament soon after the Central Bank bombing he said that the fund-raising activities for the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] have now reached a peak in those countries and are being conducted in several ways. Some of these, like extortions from asylum seekers, have been exposed recently by a Swiss journalist. Asylum seeking itself is being sponsored by the LTTE as a secure source of funds for Tiger activity.

As Mr. Kadirgamar told parliament, "There is also a clearly evident relationship between collection of funds in foreign countries and the promotion by the LTTE of the outflow of asylum seekers into western countries. The LTTE needs a considerable population of asylum seekers abroad in order to generate sufficient funds through extortion".

Fund-raising activities are also being conducted in other ways. Fund-raisers have asked donors to send the contributions to the LTTE which is listed as a 'humanitarian' organisation! Sometimes the fund-raising is very open. The Internet, Mr. Kadirgamar said, is being used to raise funds. Once it circulated a message called "Urgent Appeal For Money For Missiles. Contribute Generously To LTTE". Some of these funds to that "humanitarian" organisation may have gone to the bombing of the Central Bank building which the world has reacted to with horror.

If international terrorism is to be curbed then we must combine our resources. That was how the ship carrying arms was destroyed off the northeastern coast. Many friendly countries helped in that operation. Those in the West who wish to see democracy, not fascism, thrive in this country should act immediately.

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